

phidim, and incamped in the Wilderness of *Sinai* before the Mount of God. Here God called for *Moses*, who going up to it, received a Command to tell the *Israelites*, that they ought to consider the tender Love of God to them, which had so eminently and often appeared in their Deliverance and Preservation; and that tho' they had murmured and distrusted his Providence, yet if now they would be obedient and keep his Covenant, he would take them into his Protection, and that they should be his People, a Priestly Kingdom, and a Holy Nation. *Moses* having communicated this to the Elders and People, they unanimously answered, that whatsoever the Lord had commanded them, they would obediently perform. *Moses* returned the People's Answer to God, who said to *Moses*, "I will come to you
" in the Darkness of a Cloud, that the People may see
" something of me, when I shall speak to you, and
" may always believe you." Then he commanded him to direct the People to cleanse themselves, and to wash their Garments during two Days, and to be ready the third Day, on which the Lord would (e) descend in the Sight of all the People on Mount *Sinai*; that he should mark out Bounds about the Mountain, which none was to pass before the Trumpet began to sound. These were the preparatory (f) Solemnities to the Lord's giving the (g) Law; after which followed divers judicial Laws intermixed with some Ceremonials, and backed with Promises of Blessings upon the People's Obedience.

All which *Moses* wrote in a Book, and then read it to the People; and having by God's Command brought

(e) *Descend.* It must be observed here, and likewise in other Places of the same Nature, that the Scripture, suiting itself to Man's common Way of Speaking and Thinking, assigns such Things to God, as are only proper to the Effects. It is said that God descended on the Mountain, because he made his Presence more visible there by sensible and surprizing Effects. It may be also said, it was an Angel de-

scended from God, who spoke to *Moses*, and gave the Law; but the Text expresses, *Exod.* xix. 20. that it was God himself, who descended upon the Top of Mount *Sinai*.

(f) *Solemnities.* See *Exod.* from *Cb.* xix, to xxiv.

(g) *Law.* Which contained the Ten Commandments, from thence called the *Decalogue*.

up *Aaron* with his two Sons, *Nadab* and *Abihu*, and seventy of the Elders of *Israel*, so near that they saw the Divine Majesty, yet they were not smitten by it, but surviv'd the Sight.

The next Time *Moses* went up to the *Mountain*, (*b*) which was likewise then at the Command of God, he took none with him but *Joshua*, directing the Elders to tarry for them till they should return, and referring them to *Aaron* and *Hur* for Assistance and Advice in any difficult Case that might be brought before them. *Moses* was no sooner got up to the Mountain of God but a Cloud covered the Mount, and the Glory of the Lord abode upon it like a devouring Fire, in the Sight of the Children of *Israel*. The seventh Day God called *Moses* from the midst of the Fire, and he entered the midst of the Cloud, and went further up the Mount, and remained there forty Days, and as many Nights. During which Time he received the Tables of Stone, wherein God himself had written the Law; and was instructed by God how the Tent or Tabernacle should be made, wherein he should be worshipped. He likewise described the Sanctuary, the Table for the Shew-bread, the Altar of Frankincense, the Altar for the Burnt-offerings, the Court of the Tabernacle, the Bason to wash in, the Ark, the Candlestick, the Priestly Vestments, and taught him how the Priests were to be consecrated, what Part of the Offering they were to take, and how the perpetual Sacrifice was to be offered: God likewise pitched upon the very Men to undertake the Building, *Bezaleel* of the Tribe of *Judah*, and *Aholiab* of the Tribe of *Dan*. In fine, he recommended the keeping of the Sabbath, and having ended the (*i*) Discourse, gave *Moses* two Stone Tables, containing the Covenant or Law, which were written by the Hand of God.

Whilst *Moses* was conversing with God upon the Mount, and *Joshua* dutifully waiting his Return, the

(*b*) Which. See *Exod.* xxiv. 12.

(*i*) Discourse. See the Particulars from the twenty third to the thirty second Chapter of *Exodus*.

People in the Camp growing impatient of his long Absence tumultuously repair to *Aaron*, and, as if they despair'd of God's Protection, because he did not continually work Miracles to convince them, they concluded *Moses* had deserted them; and therefore demanded of *Aaron* to make them Gods to go before them. *Aaron*, who should have restrained them from this Madness, too easily complied, and for want of reproofing and expostulating with them the Unreasonableness of their wild Desire, contributed to their Idolatry; and, as if he had a Mind to forward them in this wicked Intention, he bid them break off the golden (k) Rings, which were in the Ears of their Wives and Children, and bring them to him. Which when he had received he tied in a Bag, and made a molten (l) Calf of them. Which be-

O 4 ing

(k) *Rings.* These probably were the same which they had borrowed of the Egyptians, *Exod.* xii. 35.

(l) *Calf.* The Reason why they worshipped God rather in the Similitude of a Calf, than of any other Creature, is generally by Expositors conceived to be from the Corruptions they had learned among the Egyptians, (who worshipped their Idol *Apis* or *Serapis* in a living Ox, and likewise in an Image made in the Form and Similitude of an Ox with a Bushel on his Head) in Memory, as some say, of *Pharaoh's* Dreams, and *Joseph's* Providence, who measured out the Corn to the People in that extrem Dearth. Concerning the Sin of the *Israelites* in making this Calf or Ox, the modern *Jeros* transfer the Fault upon certain *Profelyte Egyptians*, who came out with them; and they say, that when *Aaron* cast their Jewels into the Fire, those Egyptians, contrary to his Expectation, by their Art Magick produced a Calf, to which Purpose they urge *Aaron's* own Words, *Exod.* xxxii. 24. *I did cast the Gold into the Fire, and thereof came this Calf;* as if his Art or Will went not with the making thereof, but that of itself it made itself. Which Answer of his rather shews how vain the Wit of Man is in the Excuse of Sin.

In this very Text, *viz.* *Exod.* xxxii. 4. where Mention is made of the molten

Calf, there seems to be a very great Mistake by most Versions, even in the LXX. and overseen by the Expositors and Critics. The *Geneva* Version says, that *Aaron*, having received the Ear-rings from the *Israelites*, *fashioned them with a graving Tool, and made a molten Calf of them;* as if the Calf had been engraven before it was molten. Our Translation, to avoid this Absurdity, renders, *he fashioned it with a graving Tool after he had made it a molten Calf;* but both seem to be mistaken in thinking that the golden Calf was engraven. For who taught *Aaron* to engrave? Or how could it be engraven so soon, since *Aaron* presented it to the People on the Morrow? And if the Custom of engraving molten Work was then known, how comes it to pass that the Scripture, which speaks about thirty Times of it, mentions nothing of their Engraving, even in *Solomon's* Time, since it may be presumed, that the Furniture of *Solomon's* Temple was wrought with much more Art than the Figure of *Aaron's* Calf? The Occasion of the Mistake seems to be the Ambiguity of the *Hebrew* Word *Tsur*, which sometimes signifies *to fashion*, but signifies likewise *to bind or tie*; and of the Word *Chereth*, which signifies a *graving Tool*; and sometimes a *Sack or Bag*, *2 Kings* v. 23. But the Nature and Circumstances of the Thing, which is here spoken of, might have

ing done, they own'd it for their God, saying, *This is thy God, O Israel, that brought thee out of the Land of Egypt.* Aaron seeing the People so much delighted with their golden God, as if he were possessed with the same idolatrous Spirit, built an Altar before it, and proclaimed a Feast to be holden the next Day to the Lord. And indeed the People did make a revelling Feast of it; for after they had made their Oblations and Peace-offerings, they sat down to eat and drink, and spent the whole Day in Feasting and Pleasure.

Moses was still in the Mount conversing with his God, whilst the wanton *Israelites* were revelling in the Camp, little suspecting so sudden a Change in a People who had so lately and solemnly entered into a Covenant of Obedience to all that God should command. But he, from whom no Secret can be hid, is instantly apprised of this sudden Revolt; therefore telling *Moses* what Crime the People had committed, he expresses his Indignation against their Rebellion and Ingratitude. “Go down, saith he, for (m) thy People whom thou broughtest out of *Egypt* have corrupted themselves. I know them to be an obstinate People in many Instances, therefore intercede not for them, but see me express my Resentments in the Destruction of them; and to thee will I transfer the Blessings I intended to them, and of thee will I make a great Nation.” But notwithstanding the *Israelites* frequent Rebellions against God, and tumultuous Mutinies against him, *Moses* is so far from seeking his own Interest by their Destruction, that he interposes with his Prayers; and with his importunate Intreaties so appeased the Lord, that he desisted from their Destruction.

Moses having deprecated the Anger of God hastened down from the Mount, and took *Joshua* with him, who

have made them understand, that the Words should have been rendered, *And he received them at their Islands, and tied them in a Bag, and made a molten Calf of them.*

(m) *Thy, &c.* By this Expression it seems as if God disown'd them any more to be his People, and would cast them off.

EXODUS CHAP. XXXII. ³⁶

Moses breaks the Tables.



EXODUS 32. Verse 19.

*As soon as he came nigh unto his camp
that he saw his calf, & his dancing, & Moses
anger waxed hot; & he cast his tables out
200. c.*

had, during his Stay above, waited for him below. As they went, *Joshua*, hearing the Noise of the People shouting, observed to *Moses*, that there was a Noise of War in the Camp. But *Moses*, who knew the Truth of it before, reply'd, That the Noise was not like that of those which shouted for Victory, nor of those that cried for Quarter, but of such as rejoiced. Being come within Sight of the Camp, *Moses* spied the Calf, and the People dancing before it; which so incens'd him, that in a holy Rage at their Ingratitude and Rebellion, he threw the Tables, whereon God had with his own Hand written the Law, against the Rock, and brake them to Pieces; Then taking the Idol Calf, to deface it, he first threw it into the Fire and burnt it, and grinding it to Powder, he took the Powder, and strewed it upon the Water; and to make them more sensible of their Folly in worshipping that as a God, which should pass through their Bodies, he made the *Israelites* drink of the Water.

After this, *Moses* calls *Aaron* to Account for having given way to this Sin of the People; which *Aaron* very poorly excuses, by urging the mischievous Temper of the People; and that he had complied with them for Quiet-sake. *Moses* did not long reason the Case with *Aaron*; for seeing that the People by *Aaron's* Indiscretion were naked, and stripped of the Defence and Protection which God's Presence and Favour had been to them, and that too amongst their Enemies; and to make a further Atonement for this Sin, besides that of burning the Calf, he went into the midst of the Camp, and calling out, said, "Let those who are for the Lord join themselves with me." Upon which all the Sons of *Levi*, who were not concerned in the late Idolatry, repaired to him, whom he ordered to arm, and go thro' the Camp, and slay all the Ring-leaders of the Sedition, with their Followers: The *Levites* thus commissioned fell on, and slew about three thousand Men. For which laudable Zeal, and ready Obedience,

Obedience, *Moses* (n) blessed the Family of *Levi*, assuring them that by this shedding the Blood of their idolatrous Brethren without Favour or Distinction, they had consecrated themselves to the Lord, who would not fail to bless them for it.

And now, tho' God was pleased to accept this Execution in part of Satisfaction for the present, yet he would not discharge the People, but threatened them, that in the Day when he should visit, he would visit them for this Sin. And he did afterwards upon fresh Provocations remember it, and added to their Punishment. After this *Moses* returning to the Lord acknowledged *Israel's* Sin, and asked Forgiveness for it, with that Earnestness and Concern, that he pray'd God to blot him out of his (o) Book, rather than not to pardon them. But this was inconsistent with the Divine Justice, and therefore God gave him this short Answer,

(n) *Exod. i.* This I will do to please God, *Exod. xxxii. 27.* that he turned away the Curse of *Jacob* against *Levi*, *Gen. xlix. 7.* to a Blessing. See *Deut. xxiii. 9.*

(o) *Exod. xxxii. 32.* It is said, that God being greatly offended with the *Israelites* for their Idolatry, resolved straightway to consume them. *Moses* intercedes for them, and prays, that God would pardon them, or that he would blot him out of his Book. But what could be understood by this Book, but the Scroll, wherein all the Names of the *Israelites* that were to enter into the Land of *Canaan* were written? This Way of Speaking is evidently grounded upon the numbering of the Children of *Israel* at their coming out of *Egypt*, and the registering of their Names in a Scroll or Register, as may be seen, *Numb. i.* The same Method was likewise taken at the Return from the *Babylonish* Captivity, as may be seen in the *Book of Ezra* and *Nehemiah*; and those, who were enrolled in this Book, are said to be written for Life, or among the living, *Isa. iv. 2* for every Year they blotted out of this Catalogue the Names of those who died. From hence we find a Scripture frequent Mention made of the *Book of Life*, and from the Jewish Tradition, that those who

are written in it are absolutely predestinated to Salvation. But this Way of Speaking, can have no such Signification in Scripture; else we shall make *Moses* to desire a Thing which was impossible even to God (who cannot be unjust) namely, that he would blot him out of the *Book of Life*. If *Moses* had desired to be damned, *Atheists* and *Deists* might have Reason to say, that he had made a very extravagant Demand, which look'd more like Madness than Inspiration. But *Dr. Scillingfleet*, after several others, has proved that he had not the least Thought of Damnation. No such Thing can be found in what goes before or after; and besides, the whole Design of this Chapter is quite opposite to this Sort of Thought, and runs all on temporal Punishments. And this may be gathered from a like Prayer of *Moses* on another Occasion, where he says, *If thou deal thus with me, kill me I pray thee out of Hand*, *Numb. xi. 15.* The Hebrew Word also, which is rendered to blot out, signifies to kill or destroy. It is therefore evident, that to be written in the *Book of Life*, signifies to be under the Favour and Protection of God, and that to be blotted out of it, signifies to be lost by a just Punishment, as most of the Learned do allow.

“ Who

“Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my Book.”

God being thus in Part appeased, commanded *Moses* to lead the People to the Place he had appointed; but let him know, he was not willing to go along with them, because they were a stiff-necked People, lest they should provoke him to consume them in the Way; yet, to shew he had still some Tenderness and Regard for them, he would send his Angel before them, to drive out the Inhabitants of the promised Land, that so he might perform the Oath, which he had sworn to *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*. This was very afflicting News to the *Israelites*, who now plainly perceived, that God's withdrawing his immediate Presence from them was the Effect of their Rebellion; upon which they mourned, and, to shew their Humiliation, they forbore to put on their Ornaments. But *Moses*, to humble them the more, and make them more sensible of their Sin, took a Tent, and pitching it without the Camp at a good Distance, called it the Tabernacle of the Congregation: Intimating to them by this, that the Lord was so highly offended with them for their Idolatry, that he had removed from them, and would no longer dwell amongst them as he had done before: By which Means, every one that sought the Lord was obliged to go to this Tabernacle without the Camp; and when *Moses* went to it, as he entered in, the cloudy Pillar, in which the Lord used to appear, descended and stood at the Door of the Tabernacle.

The People being thus humbled, were more careful in observing the Motions of *Moses*; and therefore when he went out of the Camp to the Tabernacle, they rose up, and stood every Man at his Tent Door looking after him, till he was gone in: And when they saw the cloudy Pillar, which they knew was a Token of God's Presence, they all worshipped. Here the Lord talked with *Moses*, and permitted *Moses* to (p) talk with him very familiarly; which Favour *Moses* improved

improved to the People's Advantage; labouring with much Importunity to reconcile God to them. After which, the Lord having, at *Moses's* Request, and to encourage and comfort him, shewn him so much of his Glory, as *Moses* was capable of seeing, being overcome with this good Man's Excess of Charity, he bid him prepare two new * Tables of Stone, like the former, which he had broken, and come up himself alone with them in the Morning to Mount *Sinai*, and I, said he, will write in those Tables the Words that were in the first.

Moses accordingly rose up early in the Morning, and repair'd to Mount *Sinai* with the two Tables, where prostrating himself before the Divine Majesty, who appear'd in the Cloud on the Top of the Mount, most humbly beseeching him to pardon the Sin of his People, the Lord favourably received his Intercession, and promis'd to make a Covenant with (q) his

(p) *Talk.* *Moses's* talking familiarly with God is accommodated to Man's Capacity, which is express'd *Exod.* xxxiii. 11. to be *Face to Face*, as a Man speaks to his Friend.

* *Tables of Stone.* Authors vary much in their Opinions concerning the Inventors of Letters. Some say, *Cadmus* brought the Use of them into *Greece*; others say, *Palamides*. Some say, *Rhadamanthus* brought them into *Affyria*; *Memnon* into *Egypt*; *Hercules* into *Phrygia*, and *Carmen* into *Latium*. Likewise, some say the *Phœnicians* had the first Knowledge of them; others, the *Ethiopians*, and other, the *Affyrians*. But upon better Grounds it is thought by *Eusebius* in his *Præpar. Evang.* l. 18. That *Moses* first taught the Use of Letters to the *Jews*, and that the *Phœnicians* learn'd them from the *Jews*, and the *Grecians* from the *Phœnicians*. The Matter upon which Men wrote in ruder Times was different: Some wrote on Rinds of Trees; some on Tiles; some on Tables; which last was chiefly in Use among the *Jews*. The *Decalogue* was written on two Tables of Stone. And in *Isaiab's* Time they used Tables. *Ch.* iii. v. 8. The *Septuagint* say, *ib.* on a Box-Table; as if the Writing-

Tables were made of Box-Trees. They used not Pens or Quills, but a certain Instrument or Punch made of Iron or Steel, called *Stylus*, which was sharp at one End, for the more convenient indenting, or carving the Characters; and broad at the other, for scraping out. As to the Custom of writing on Stone or Brick, it was undoubtedly very ancient. *Josephus Ant. lib.* 11. says, That *Setb* having been instructed by *Adam* in Astronomy, and understanding that the World was twice to perish, once by a Deluge, afterwards by a general Conflagration, reduced this Art to an Epitome, and inscribed it on two Pillars, one of Brick, against the Violence of Fire; the other of Stone against the Inundation of Water; one of which (the Pillar of Stone) he affirms to have been extant in his Time, in a Place called *Syrias* or *Seirath*, conceived by *Vossius, lib. de Ætate Mundi, p.* 271. to be the Land bordering on Mount *Ephraim*, not far from *Jericho*.

(q) *His People.* *Exod.* xxxiv. 10. God here calls the Children of *Israel*, *Thy People*, that is, *Moses's* People, for he would not yet call them *His*: For this Reconciliation of God's was but conditional, and in Proportion to their Obedience.

People,

EXODUS CHAP. XXIV.

37

Moses face shineth.



EXODUS 34. Verse 35.

And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses face shone: and Moses put the vail upon his face

People, upon Condition they would keep his Commandments ; that they would not worship the Gods of the *Canaanites* ; that they would make no Alliances with the People of that Country ; that they would have no strange Gods ; that they would keep the Sabbath, the Passover, and other Festivals ordained by the (r) Law.

Moses, having continued in the Mount forty Days and forty Nights in Communion with God without Meat and Drink, returned to the People with the two Tables of the Law : But he knew not that with God's talking with him his Face had contracted a (s) Splendor. Wherefore *Aaron* and the *Israelites* being frightened at the Lustre of his Countenance, durst not approach him ; which *Moses* perceiving, he put a Veil upon his Face, and then calling the Rulers and all the People to him, he gave them in Command all that the Lord had charged him with in the Mount : And from that Time so long as the Lustre lasted upon his Face, when he talked with the People he put on the Veil, but when he went in to speak to the Lord he put it off.

At this Time *Moses* acquainted the People, that it was the Lord's Will to have a Tabernacle built ; and that he had commanded him to speak to them to bring in their Offerings, which were to consist of Materials with which it was to be made. The Directions now given were the same with those when *Moses* went first up to the Mount ; but, by reason of the People's Transgression in idolizing the Calf, they

(r) Law. See *Exod.* xxxiv. from v. 10. to v. 27.

(s) Splendor. The Vulgar *Latin* renders *Moses's* Face *Cornuta*, or *horned* ; from whence, it is probable, of old he was pictured with Horns on his Head. But the *LXX.* render it much better, *glorified*, to which the Apostle, *2 Cor.* iii. 7. alludes. No Doubt, by this divine Conversation, *Moses's* Face was illustrated, and we may reasonably suppose, that the Rays of this divine Light

might terminate in Points not unlike the taper End of a Horn. And this glorious Appearance in *Moses's* Face might be designed by God for several Reasons. As, 1. That the People might pay him the greater Reverence and Fear. 2. To testify God's great Love and Esteem for him. 3. To terrify the *Israelites* from violating the Law. And these Beams, or Rays of Light, St. *Ambrose*, in *Psal.* cxviii. says, continued to *Moses* all the rest of his Life.

were

were not then delivered to them. This Offering was not to be exacted; but the People were to give it voluntarily; to which God so inclined them; that they soon brought in more than was requisite, so that *Moses* was obliged to cause Proclamation to be made to restrain their Liberality.

The Materials thus prepared were delivered to *Bezaleel* and *Aholiab*, two ingenious Men, and well skilled in Architecture and all Manner of Workmanship, who employed all Men and Women; that had any Skill in curious Operation. This Tabernacle was a Tent covered with Curtains and Skins, but much larger than the other Tents. It was divided into two Parts; the one covered, and properly called the Tabernacle; and the other open, called the Court. The cover'd Part was again divided into two other Parts; the one called the Holy of Holies, the Curtains of which were made of embroidered Linen of several Colours. There were ten Curtains, twenty-eight Cubits long, and four in Breadth. Five Curtains together made two Coverings, which being made fast together covered all the Tabernacle. Over the rest there were two other Coverings, the one of Goats Hair, the other of Sheeps Skins. These Veils or Coverings were laid on a square Frame of Planks resting on Bases. There were forty-eight large Planks, each a Cubit and half wide, and ten Cubits high, twenty of them on each Side, and six at one End to the Westward, and one on each Corner: Each Plank was borne on two Silver Bases; they were let into one another, and held by Bars running the Length of the Planks. The East End was open, and only covered with a Curtain. The Holy of Holies was parted from the rest of the Tabernacle by a Curtain made fast to four Pillars, standing ten Cubits from the End. The whole Length of the Tabernacle was thirty-two Cubits high, the upper Curtain hung on the North
and

and South-sides eight Cubits, and on the East and West four Cubits.

The Court was a Spot of Ground an hundred Cubits long, and fifty in Breadth, inclos'd by twenty Columns, each of them twenty Cubits high, and ten in Breadth, covered with Silver, and standing on Copper Bases, five Cubits distant from each other, between which there were Curtains drawn, and fastened with Hooks. At the East-end was an Entrance twenty Cubits wide, covered with a Curtain hanging loose.

The Ark was in the Sanctuary; it was a square Chest made of *Shittim*-Wood, two Cubits and a half long, and one Cubit and a half wide and deep. It was covered with Gold Plates, and had a Gold Cornice which bore the Lid. On the Sides of it were Rings, to put Poles thro' to carry it. The Covering was all of Gold, and called the Propitiatory or Mercy-Seat. There were two Cherubims on it, which covered it with their Wings; the Tables of the Law were in the Ark, which was therefore called the Ark of the Testimony, or of the Covenant.

The Table was made of Cedar covered with Gold, two Cubits long, one in Breadth, and one and a half in Height. About the Edge of it was an Ornament; it stood on four Feet, and had wooden Bars plated with Gold to carry it on. They laid on it the Offering or Shew-bread, which was changed every Day, six Loaves at each End, with Incense over them. It was not lawful for any but the Priests to eat of that Bread.

The Candlestick was of pure Gold, had seven Branches, three on each Side, and one in the Middle: Each Branch had three Knobs like Apples, and three Sockets in the Shape of half Almond-shells; that in the Middle had four; on each Branch was a Gold Lamp, and there were Gold Snuffers and Nippers to dress them.

There

There were two Altars, one for the Burnt-offerings, five Cubits long and wide, and three in Height, with a Sort of Seraphim at each Corner. It was hollow, covered both within and without with Brass Plate, and open both at Top and Bottom. In the Midst of it was a Copper Grate, standing on four Feet, a Cubit and a half high, and fastened with Hooks and Rings. On it were burned the Wood and the Offerings. There were all Necessaries for that Service, as Kettles, Ladles, Tongs, Hooks and the rest.

The Altar of the Incense was but one Cubit in Length and Breadth, and two Cubits high. It was plated with Gold, and had a Crown of Gold over it. This Altar was in the Sanctuary with the Ark; that of the Burnt-offerings was in the Tabernacle on the North-side, on the Table opposite to it on the South-side. In the Court was a great Copper Basin on a Pillar, with several Cocks for Water to run out, for washing the Hands of those that ministered.

The Vestments of the High-Priest were the Breast-Plate, the Ephod, the Robe, the Close Coat, the Mitre, and the Girdle. The Ephod, the Robe, and the Close Coat were of Linen, and covered the whole Body from the Neck to the Heels. Over all was a Purple Tunick, a Vestment larger and finer wrought, which reach'd not so low, but at the bottom of it hung Pomegranates and Bells. The Ephod consisted of two Bands made of Gold Thread, and of several Colours, made fast to a Sort of Collar, which hung down before and behind on both Shoulders, and meeting serv'd for a Girdle to the Tunick or Vestment. On the Shoulders were two large precious Stones, which join'd the fore and the hind Parts of the Ephod, on which were carved the Names of the twelve Tribes of *Israel*, six on each of them. The Breast-plate being of the same Workmanship, but double, was made fast with Gold Chains to the Ephod. It was a square Or-
nament,

namment, very thick, and covering the Breast. The Girdle was the Ephod itself cross'd, or some other Band of the same Matter. The Mitre was of fine Flax; it covered the Head, and on the Forehead was a Gold Plate, on which were carved these Words, THE HOLINESS OF THE LORD. These were the solemn Ornaments belonging to the High-Priest; the others wore only a simple Tunick or Vestment, a Linen Mitre, and a Girdle. They had all Breeches of Linen and Cotton, covering their Legs and Thighs, and reaching up to the Waist.

The Work being finished, and the Vestments made according to these Directions, they were brought to *Moses* for his Approbation, who having view'd them, and found that all was done as the Lord had commanded, he praised God for the People's Diligence, and prayed for them. And now all Things being ready, on the first Day of the first Month, in the second Year after their Departure from *Egypt*, the Tabernacle was by God's immediate Command set up; and all its Furniture disposed in the proper Places. Which done, the Cloud covered it, and the Glory of the Lord filled it; so that for a while *Moses* himself was not able to enter it. And this Cloud was the Signal to the People of *Israel*, by which they knew when to march, and when to rest. For when the Cloud was taken up from over the Tabernacle, the Children of *Israel* journeyed; but if the Cloud was not taken up, they journeyed not until it was.

The Tabernacle being set up, and all Things prepared, God proceeded to give Direction to *Moses*, and by him to the People, in what Manner his publick Worship under that Dispensation should be performed; which was by Sacrifice: And this was an Offering made to God, to acknowledge his Sovereignty over his Creatures, and to expiate Sin. Only five Sorts of Creatures were appointed to be offered in Sacrifice; which were Oxen, Lambs, Goats,

Turtles, and young Doves, all which were to be Males, and without Blemish. He, who presented an Offering, did it at the Altar, and laid his two Hands on the Head of the Creature, and then the Throat of it was cut within the first Tabernacle. The Blood was received in a Basin, and with it the Priest sprinkled the Vessels, and Corners of the Altar; the rest was spilt at the Foot of the Altar. The Victim was flead, cut in Pieces, and laid on the Altar, where either the whole, or some of them was burnt, according to the several Sorts of Sacrifices. Libations likewise were added to the Sacrifices: All the Wine, or Flour, which were offered with the Victim, were called Effusion, or Pouring out. There was a separate Offering of fine Flour and Oil, baked on an Iron, or in a Pan. These were sprinkled with Oil, and Frankincense added to them. The Sacrifices were of four Sorts: 1. The Burnt-Offering, every Part of which was consumed by Fire on the Altar, after washing the Feet and Entrails. 2. The Peace-Offering, of which only the inward Fat or Tallow was burnt on the Altar, made up with the Liver and Kidneys, and the Tails of the Lambs. The Breast and the right Shoulder belonged to the Priests, who were obliged to eat them in the Holy Place; the rest belonged to him who offered the Sacrifice. 3. The Sacrifice for Sin committed either wilfully or ignorantly; and in this the Priest took some of the Blood of the Victim, dipped his Finger in it, and sprinkled seven Times towards the Veil of the Sanctuary. The same Parts of the Victim were burnt on the Altar in this as in the former Sacrifice; the rest, if the Sacrifice was offered for the Sin of the High-Priest, or for the People, was carried without the Camp to be burnt there, with the Skin, the Head, the Feet and the Bowels: If it was for a private Person, the Victim was divided, as was said above, between the Priest and the Offerer. 4. The Sacrifice of Oblation was either fine Flour, or Incense,

EXODUS CHAP. XXV. 38
The Tabernacle with the Vessels thereof.



EXODUS 25. Verse 8.

*And let them make me a Sanctuary
that I may dwell amongst them:
According to all that I shew thee. &c.*

cense, or Cakes of fine Flour and Oil baked, or the first Fruits of new Corn: With the Things offered there were always Oil, Salt, Wine, and Frankincense. All the Frankincense was cast into the Fire; but of the other Things offered, the Priest took one Part, which he also burnt, and the rest belonged to him.

The next Thing that regarded the Worship of the *Israelites* was their Festivals. The first of which was their Sabbath, which they kept very strictly, dedicating it wholly to Rest, not doing the least servile Work on that Day. It began, like all other Festivals, on one Evening, and ended the next. The Passover was likewise a very solemn Festival. It began the Evening of the fourteenth Day of the *March* Moon. They eat none but unleavened Bread for seven Days, and the seventh Day was another great Festival. The first Day after the Passover they offered new Ears of Corn, and from that Day they reckoned seven full Weeks, or fifty Days; and that fiftieth Day was another solemn Festival, called the Harvest Festival; and they offered in Thanksgiving two Loaves of new Wheat, as the first Fruits of the Harvest. The first Day of the seventh Month, which was the first of the Civil Year, published by Sound of Trumpet, was also a Festival. The tenth of the same Month was kept the Feast of Expiation, and that was the Day on which the Priests went into the Sanctuary. They offered two Goats, one of which was a solemn Sacrifice for Sin. The High-Priest took the Blood of this, and of the Lamb killed in the Sanctuary, and sprinkled them; the other Goat was carried not only out of the Tabernacle, but without the Camp also, and was therefore called *Aza-zel*, or the Scape-Goat. On the fifteenth of the same Month began the Feast of Tabernacles, and lasted eight Days, being kept as a Memorial that the Children of *Israel* had lived in Tents. During this Feast they lived in Huts covered with Boughs of Trees, and spent those Days in Mirth, holding Boughs in
P 2 their

their Hands, with which they went round the Altar. Every seventh Year was dedicated to Rest ; for in them they neither sowed nor reaped ; but the fiftieth Year, called *Jubilee*, was most solemn, for then all Estates alienated returned to those who had sold them, and Slaves recovered their Liberty.

The *Israelites* in their Eating distinguished between two Sorts of Creatures, clean and unclean ; it was lawful for them to eat of the first, but not of the last. There were two Qualifications required for the reckoning of a Beast clean ; which were, that it should have a cloven Hoof, and that it should chew the Cud ; so that it was unlawful for them to eat Swine's Flesh, because they do not chew the Cud ; or Rabbits and Hares, because they have not cloven Feet, like the Ox, the Stag, the Sheep, but Toes joined by Skins. Among Fishes they were allowed to eat such as had Fins and Scales. All Birds of Prey were forbid them ; and it was unlawful for them to eat Blood, or the Flesh of Beasts strangled.

Of Uncleannefs there were many Sorts among the *Israelites* : Not only they who eat of unclean Beasts were reckoned unclean, but also those who touched their Carcasses. Leprosy was reckoned the greatest Uncleannefs ; of the Nature and Quality of which the Priest was to judge, and to separate the Lepers from the rest of the People as he thought fit. There was also a Leprosy which clung to Cloths and Walls, and the Garments ; after which the Moveables, and the Houses became unclean. The Women were unclean after lying-in, for forty Days if they had a Son, and sixty Days if it were a Daughter. Of these Uncleannefs, some Sorts were cleansed by washing their Garments and Bodies ; and others, as the last, by offering Sacrifice to cleanse them.

The Laws relating to Matrimony were these : The *Israelites* were forbid to marry strange Women. One Man

Man might have several Wives; but the Persons among whom it was not allowed to contract Matrimony were the Father, the Mother, the Mother-in-Law, the Sister by the Father or Mother's Side, the Son's or Daughter's Daughter, the Father's Wife's Daughter, the Father or Mother's Sister, the Uncle, the Daughter-in-Law, the Brother's Wife, the Wife's Sister and Daughter, or Grandson or Grand-daughter. However, it was not only lawful, but a Command, that the Brother should marry the Brother's Widow, if he died without Issue. Adultery and other Sins of Impurity were severally forbidden by the Law. In short, there was a Ceremony to try whether Women were guilty of Adultery. But besides the moral Precepts contained in the Decalogue, and more particularly explained in the Books of *Moses*, that holy Legislator by God's Direction gave them Laws for the Government of their Commonwealth, which were agreeable to Reason and Equity.

After some of these Directions for the Worship of God, *Moses*, by the express Command of God, appointed *Aaron* High-Priest, and his Sons and their Offspring to be the Priestly Race. And when they were sanctified, *Moses* robed them, anointed their Heads with Oil, and made them offer Sacrifice for Sin. The Function of the Priests in general was to offer Sacrifice to the Lord, only the High-Priest's was peculiar; for he was allowed to go once a Year into the Sanctuary on the Day of Expiation, clad in his Priestly Garments, to burn Incense there before the Ark, and sprinkle the Blood of the Offering seven Times with his Finger. To the Priests were joined all the Tribe of *Levi* to serve in the Tabernacle; to both which were appointed particular Allowances for their Subsistence. But if any of the Priestly Race, or of the Tribe of *Levi*, had any bodily Imperfections, they were excluded from the Function, but still enjoyed the Right and Privileges of their Birth. The

Obligations they lay under were these: They were to drink no Wine or intoxicating Liquors when they were to officiate in the Tabernacle; they were not to marry a Woman that was divorced, or had been prostituted; they were not to be at Funerals, unless they were of their own Fathers, Mothers, Sons, Daughters, Brothers, and Maiden Sisters. But now let us return to the History.

Eight Days after the Consecration of *Aaron* and his Sons, *Aaron* offered his first Burnt-Offering for himself and the People. This was so acceptable to God, that he gave a miraculous Testimony of his approving it by sending Fire upon the Altar, which consumed the Offering in the Sight of the People, who in loud Shouts and Acclamations expressed their Joy for God's so signally owning their Offering, and in Reverence they prostrated themselves on the Ground.

The Fire thus miraculously kindled, ought to have been kept continually burning; for so the Lord had expressly (*t*) commanded. But *Nadab* and *Abihu*, two unhappy Sons of *Aaron*, forgetful of their Duty, took their Censers, and putting (*u*) common Fire in them, laid Incense thereon, and offered (*w*) strange Fire before the Lord. This profane Approach the affronted Majesty of Heaven instantly resents; for a suffocating Flame

(*t*) *Commanded* See *Levit. vi. v. 12, 13.* This Fire which, *Levit. ix. v. 24.* is said to come from Heaven, and to have consumed the first *Burnt Offering*, lasted till the Captivity of *Babylon*.

(*u*) *Common.* There were two Sorts of Fire used in the Tabernacle; the Holy Fire which came from Heaven, and which God had commanded to be kept always burning for the Use of the Altar of *Burnt-Offering*; and the common or profane Fire, which was used to boil the Flesh of the *Peace-Offering* and *Sacrifice for Sin*.

(*w*) *Strange Fire.* Whether these Sons of *Aaron* had too far indulged themselves in the Use of Wine, or other strong Liquors which might have made them for-

getful of their Duty, doth not plainly appear from the Text, *Levit. x. 1.* Yet some *Jewish* Doctors affirm it; and from the Context, *Ib. v. 9.* there is some Reason to suspect it, because, as soon as they were carried out, God charg'd *Aaron* and his Sons, on Pain of Death, *Not to drink Wine or strong Drink*, when they were to go into the Tabernacle of the Congregation; telling them, *It shall be a Statute to them throughout all Generations.* And he assigns there the Reasons of this so strict Prohibition, *That ye may put a Difference between the Holy and Unholy, and between the Clean and Unclean; and that ye may teach the Children of Israel all the Statutes which the Lord hath spoken to them by Moses.*

darted

darted through their Inwards, and stifled them, without destroying their Bodies or Garments. *Moses* taking occasion from this sudden and terrible Judgment to make the rest of the Priests fearful of falling into the like Sin, ordered them to bring the dead Bodies of *Nadab* and *Abihu* from before the Sanctuary, and carry them out of the Camp in the same Condition they found them. He likewise charged *Aaron* and his Sons not to mourn for *Nadab* and *Abihu*, in shaving their Heads, or rending their Clothes; but that they should leave those Marks of Mourning to the rest of the People, from whom they ought to distinguish themselves in this, as well as in other Points, in Reverence to that holy Anointing whereby they had been consecrated to the Lord, and separated from the rest of their Brethren. A good Instruction and Warning to others to beware of murmuring or extream sorrowing, when the Hand of God visits in Judgment.

The next historical Matter we meet with is, of one whose Mother's Name was *Shelomith*, an *Israelitish* Woman, of the Tribe of *Dan*, but his Father was an *Egyptian*, and supposed to be a Profelyte to *Israel*. This young Man going out of his Tent quarrelled with a Man of *Israel*, and fighting, the Son of *Shelomith* is worsted. Being enraged at this Disgrace, and retaining, as we may suppose, too much of his Father's Principles, he fell a cursing and blaspheming the Name of the Lord. For this he is immediately apprehended, and brought before *Moses*, who committed him to Custody till the Mind of the Lord should be known concerning him; for though the third Command in the Decalogue forbids the taking of God's Name in vain; yet this blasphemous Cursing being an Offence of a higher Nature, against which no positive Law was yet provided, *Moses* had recourse to the Lord for Council and Direction therein; who determined thus: “ Bring forth him that hath cursed without the Camp; “ and let all that heard him lay their Hands upon his

“(x) Head, and let all the Congregation stone him.” *Moses* having from the Divine Oracle received the Sentence, ordered it to be put in Execution accordingly; and a Law was thereupon made, that whosoever should from that Time blaspheme the Name of the Lord, whether he were an *Israelite*, or a Stranger, he should be stoned to Death.

Whilst the *Israelites* lay incamped in the Wilderness of *Sinai*, the Lord appointed *Moses* to take *Aaron*, and with him a principal Man of every Tribe, whom the Lord pitched upon by Name, and make a general Muster of the Men fit to bear Arms. *Moses* therefore with *Aaron* and these Assistants having taken an exact Account by Poll, of all the Males from twenty Years old and upwards, that were able to go forth to War in *Israel*, found the Number to be (y) Six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty Men, besides the *Levites*. For God had expressly exempted the Tribe of *Levi* out of this Muster, because he had designed them to the peculiar Service of the Tabernacle; not only to take Charge thereof, and of all the Vessels belonging to it, but to take it down upon every Remove, and carry both the Tabernacle and the Vessels, and set it up when they pitched again.

After this general Muster, *Moses* and *Aaron* by the express Command of God ordered the Incampment of

(x) *Head*. This Way of laying Hands on the Heads of Criminals may seem to arise from several Causes. 1. That they were Witnesses of the Fact, and that the Person concerned suffered justly; protesting, that if he were innocent they desired his Blood might fall on their own Heads. 2. They put their Hands on the Head of the Criminal in Token of an expiatory Sacrifice; for Idolatry, Blasphemy, and such grievous Crimes, if they were not punished, they expected would attract a Guilt, not only on the Witness, but the whole Nation, which by the Death of the Criminal, as by a Victim, might be expiated. 3. That the Criminal was the just Cause of his own Death.

(y) *Six, &c.* By this we may give a

Guess how much this People were increased in Number in this Year's Time, or thereabout, (*Exod.* xix. 1, 2. and *Numb.* i. 1.) notwithstanding they had been in a traveling Condition, had been engaged in Battle with the *Amalekites*, (in which probably some of them might fall while *Amalek* prevailed, *Exod.* xviii. 11.) and had lost about Three thousand Men upon the Account of their Calf. For they were computed to be but about Six hundred thousand Men, including the Tribe of *Levi* with them, when they came out of *Egypt*, *Exod.* xii. 37. And now they were 603,550 Men, besides the Tribe of *Levi*, which being numbered by itself, yielded 22,000 Males of a Month old and upwards, *Numb.* iii. 39.

this

this great Body of People in this Manner: They were disposed into four Battalions, each under one general Standard, which were so placed that they inclosed the Tabernacle. The Standard of the Camp of *Judah* was first, which consisted of the Tribes of *Judah*, *Issachar*, and *Zebulun*, the Sons of *Leah*, pitched over-against the Tabernacle, on the East-side of it, towards the Rising of the Sun. On the South-side was the Standard of the Camp of *Reuben*, under which were the Tribes of *Reuben* and *Simeon*, the Sons of *Leah* likewise, and of *Gad* the Son of *Zilpah* her Maid. On the West-side was the Standard of the Camp of *Ephraim*, under which were the Tribes of (z) *Ephraim*, *Manasseh*, and *Benjamin*. And on the North-side was the Standard of the Camp of *Dan*, under which were the Tribes of *Dan* and *Naphtali*, the Sons of *Bilhab*, *Rachel's* Maid, and of *Asher* the Son of *Zilpah*. (a) Between the four great (b) Camps and the Tabernacle were pitched four less Camps, consisting of the Priests and *Levites*, near to the Tabernacle, in and about which their Service lay. On the East-side incamped *Moses* and *Aaron*, with *Aaron's* Sons, who had the Charge of the Sanctuary. On the South-side were the *Kohathites*, a Part of the *Levites* descended from

(z) *Ephraim*. *Ephraim* and *Manasseh* supplied the Place of *Joseph* their Father; and therefore they are taken to be *Rachel's* Children, and so they and *Benjamin* make the third Standard.

(a) *Between*. *Josephus* in *Antiq.* l. 3. c. 11. tells us, That between each Tribe in every one of these four Quarters there were distant Spaces, like Streets, where there were buying and selling as in a Market, and Tradesmen in their Shops, in Manner of a City leading to and fro. This Camp is thought to be round, a Mile distant from the Tabernacle, that is, a Sabbath-Day's Journey, as appears from *Joshua* iii. 4. where the Distance between the People and the Ark is commanded to be Two thousand Cubits.

(b) *Camps*. Each of these Camps, as is said in the Text, had its several Banner or Standard, and each Standard its Motto or Inscription. Each Standard likewise had a distinct Sign written on it: *Reuben's* Standard had the Image of a Man, *Ju-*

dah's of a Lion, *Ephraim's* of an Ox, and *Dan's* that of an Eagle. These same four Creatures are used by *Ezekiel* i. 10. to describe the Nature of Angels. Every *Cherubin* is said to have four Faces; the Face of a Man, to shew his Understanding; of a Lion, to shew his Power; of an Ox, to shew his Ministratory Office; of an Eagle, to shew his Swiftmess in the Execution of God's Will. This same Description of Angels is in *Revel.* iv. 6. By the same four, in the Opinion of many of the Fathers, are shadowed the four Evangelists: The Man shadoweth *St. Matthew*, because he begins his Gospel with the Generation of Christ, according to his Humanity; the Lion, *St. Mark*, because he begins his Gospel from that Voice of the Lion roaring in the Wilderness; the Ox, *St. Luke*, because he begins with *Zacharias* the Priest; and the Eagle, *St. John*, who, soaring aloft, beginneth with the Divinity of Christ.

Kohath,

Kobath the second Son of *Levi*. On the West-side, behind the Tabernacle, stood the *Gershonites*, another Part of the *Levites*, descended from *Gershon*, *Levi's* eldest Son. And on the North-side were planted the *Merarites*, the remaining Part of the *Levites*, who sprung from *Merari*, *Levi's* youngest Son.

This was the Order of their incamping. The Manner of their dislodging and marching was thus : When they were to remove (which was when the Cloud was taken off the Tabernacle) the Trumpet was sounded, and upon the first Alarm the Standard of *Judah* being raised, the three Tribes which belonged to it set forward. Then the Tabernacle being taken down, the *Gershonites* and the *Merarites* attended the Waggon, with the Boards and Staves of it. When these were on their March, a second Alarm was sounded ; upon which the Standard of *Reuben's* Camp advanced, with the three Tribes under it. After them followed the *Kobathites*, bearing the Sanctuary, which being more holy, and less cumbersome than the heavy Boards and Pillars of the Tabernacle, was not put into a Waggon, but carried on their Shoulders. Next followed the Standard of *Ephraim's* Camp, with the three Tribes belonging to it. And last of all, the other three Tribes under the Standard of *Dan* brought up the Rear.

(c) The People of *Israel*, having continued some time before the Mount of the Lord, decamped by God's Command

(c) *The, &c.* Designing in the Text to keep chiefly to the Historical Part of the Sacred Writ, and to preserve the Connection of Matter of Fact, with which the Preceptive would interfere, I thought it more useful for the Reader to continue the Series of the Story in the Text, and put the intervening Precepts and Orders here in the Notes. In the third and fourth Chapters of *Numbers* therefore we have the Lord's taking the *Levites* to himself in Exchange for the First-born, with the Reason for his so doing ; likewise his giving the *Levites* to the *Priests* for the Service of the Tabernacle,

distributing them into three Classes or Orders, and appointing them their several Services. Afterwards, in *Chap. v.* follows that clear and excellent Type of Gospel-Purity, and Christian Church-Discipline, expressed in commanding the Children of *Israel* to put out of the Camp every Leper, and every one that had a running Issue, and whosoever was defiled with the Dead, both Male and Female ; that they might not defile their Camps, in the midst of which the Lord dwelled. In the sixth Chapter follow divers Laws relating to Restitution in Cases of Trespas, and to the Trial of Jealousy

Command on the first Day of the second Month, the second Year after their coming out of *Egypt*. In their March the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord went before them, to search out a resting Place for them: At the setting forward of which *Moses* said, *Rise, Lord, and let thine Enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee.* And when the Ark rested again, he added, *Return, O Lord, unto the many Thousands of Israel.* Having marched three Days into the Wilderness, they came to a Place called *The Graves of Lust*, from what happened to the *Israelites* there. They murmuring against the Lord, and complaining of the Weariness of their Journey, he was so incensed against them, that he sent down Fire, and destroyed those that were in the extream Parts of the Camp. Frighted at this Judgment, they repair to *Moses*, upon whose Intercession the Fire was quenched, and the Name of that Place called *Taberah*, which signifies Burning. This Disaster, instead of terrifying them into their Duty, did but increase their Murmuring: For being come to new Quarters, they expected Change of Diet; and because God did not presently gratify them, they in Contempt prefer the rank Food of *Egypt*, Onions, Leeks, and Garlick, to the delicious heavenly Dainties with which God had daily fed them. *Moses* had often heard their Murmuring, and patiently borne with them; but now that they were grown so numerous, and the Greatness of their Numbers demanding still more Care and Vigilance to govern and provide for them, the Sense of the Weight so great a Charge occasioned, gave much Uneasiness to *Moses*, who in his Address to God complained of the heavy Burden which the Care of so numerous and mutinous

Jealousy between Men and their Wives; to the Vow of *Nazarites*, to which is subjoined the Form of that Divine Blessing which the Lord himself did dictate for the Priests to pronounce upon the People. The seventh Chapter contains the Offerings of the Princes at the De-

dication of both the Tabernacle and the Altar, &c. The Consecration and Purification of the *Levites* are set down in the eighth. A Reinforcement of the Passover, and the guiding of the *Israelites* by the Cloud in the ninth Chapter.

a People

a People brought upon him. God hears his Complaint, and immediately provides a Remedy ; bids him chuse seventy Men of the Elders of *Israel*, and bring them with him to the Tabernacle of the Congregation. *And there, said the Lord, I will come down, and talk with thee ; and I will endue them with the same Spirit with which I have inspired thee, and they shall bear the Burden of the People with thee.* Moses accordingly brought the seventy Elders of the Children of *Israel* before the Lord, who kept his Word with him ; for being inspired, they straightway prophesied. Nay, this Inspiration was so extensive, that two of those seventy, tho' they came not out with the rest to the Tabernacle, but remained behind in the Camp, were taken in among the rest, and received the same Impression of the Spirit, and prophesied as the others did. This so surprized a certain young Man, that he ran from the Camp to the Tabernacle to acquaint *Moses* that *Eldad* and *Medad*, for so they were named, were prophesying in the Camp. *Joshua*, who as yet was not acquainted with the Operations of the Lord by his Spirit, over-hearing this Message, and thinking it some Derogation from his Master, that they should prophesy, and not follow him, advised *Moses* to forbid them. But *Moses* reproving him gently for his Rashness, cry'd, " Hast thou envy them upon my
 " Account ? Would to God all the Lord's People
 " were inspired, and that they might prophesy."

When *Moses* remonstrated to the Lord his Inability to support the Government of so great a People without some Assistance, Part of his Complaint was, that the People wanted Flesh ; and he expostulates with God the Impossibility of their being supplied with it in that Place, because they were so numerous. The Lord knowing the great Fatigue *Moses* had gone thro' in the Conduct of this People, bore with him, and only gave him this gentle Rebuke ; " Is the Lord's
 " Hand shortened ? Thou shalt see whether my Word
 " shall

NUMBERS CHAP. XI.

39

Quails sent to the Israelites.



NUMBERS II. Verse 31.

And there went forth a wind from the LORD, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, etc.

220.

“ shall come to pass unto thee, or not.” Accordingly, when *Moses* with the Elders was gone back to the Camp, and had acquainted the People with it; a South Wind arose, and drove vast Numbers of (*d*) Quails from the Sea-Coast to within a Mile of the Camp, where they lay about a Yard thick upon the Ground. The People fell greedily to gathering the Quails, which they, still distrusting God’s Providence (which had hitherto never failed them) did in such great Quantities, as if they were to have no more. : But God soon calls them to a dreadful Account for their insolent Demand of Flesh, and doubtful Distrust of his Power.: For while they were regaling themselves with these Dainties, God visited them with a very severe (*e*) Plague, whereof many died, and were buried in the Place, which from their lusting after Flesh was called *Kibroth-Hattaavah*, which signifies the Graves of Lust or Concupiscence.

From hence they took their Journey to *Hazereth*, which signifies Palaces. And here another unhappy Accident befel them: *Aaron* and his Sister *Miriam* observing the great Power of *Moses* their Brother with the People, and that God chiefly made use of him in the Delivery of his sacred Oracles to them, began to envy him: And to give some Colour to their Quarrel, they pretend to fall out with him upon the Account of his marrying a Foreigner, calling her (*f*) *Ethiopian*, and emulating

(*d*) *Quails*. These Quails must be supposed to come from the *Arabian* or *Red Sea*; and as *Paran* and *Kibroth-Hattaavah* were North and North-East of the *Red Sea*, it must be a Southerly Wind. That these Quails came from the *Red Sea* is the Opinion of *Josephus*, *Pliny*, and several others, who affirm them to breed in the Coasts there.

(*e*) *Plague*. Commentators cannot agree what this Plague was: some will have it to be Fire; and that *Numb. xi. 33.* refers to the fourth Verse of the same Chapter; which I think cannot be, because this is subsequent Matter, and is named as a Punishment for the *Israelites* desiring

Flesh. Besides, there are several Accidents that intervene between the third and thirty third Verses. Some will have it a Consumption or Pithiick; others the common Pestilence or Plague. But by the Words of the Text, *v. 33.* it more probably seems to have been a suffocating Distemper, like the Squinancy, which choked them as they were eating, or soon after; for the Words are very express, *While the Meat was in their Mouths the Wrath of God fell upon them.* This is further confirmed by *Psal. lxxviii. v. 30, 31.*

(*f*) *Ethiopian*. *Zipporah*, *Moses*’s Wife, was an *Midianite*; and because *Midian* border’d on *Ethiopia*, she was so called, and it

emulating *Moses's* great Gifts and Authority, they added, “What, hath the Lord spoken only by *Moses*? Hath he not spoken also by us?” *Moses* saw their Discontent; and tho’ he was naturally of a meek Disposition; yet no Man was more ready to resent any Indignity offered to the Lord; but looking on this as a personal Pique, he would not take Notice of it. However, God, who was more immediately concerned in this, resolves to vindicate himself and his faithful Servant; for on a sudden calling for *Moses*, *Aaron*, and *Miriam*, at the Door of the Tabernacle he sharply reprehends them for their Insolence, asking them, How they durst speak against his Servant *Moses*? “(g) You share, said he, the great prophetick Office indeed, and to you I have declared my Will in Dreams and Visions; but with *Moses* I have conversed more familiarly, and I will speak Face to Face with him, and shew him as much of my Glory as he is capable of seeing.” Upon this the Lord withdrew in great Displeasure from them. *Moses* had the Comfort of seeing himself justified: But *Aaron*, to his great Confusion, sees his Sister *Miriam* made a dreadful Example of God’s Anger; for on a sudden she is become a loathsome deform’d Leper; and well knowing he deserved to share in this Curse for his ungrateful Murmuring, presently addresses himself to *Moses*, acknowledges their Sin, begs Pardon, and intercedes for his Sister, that she may be restored to her Health. Good *Moses*, who was never wanting in Charity even to his Enemies, melts into Pity, and complies with his Request. But yet, to terrify others from moving Sedition again, and because the Offence was publick, God resolves to make an Example of *Miriam* in her Cure, and therefore he commands *Moses* to turn her out of the Camp, as a common Leper, for seven Days, and then to receive her again.

it is sometimes in holy Scripture comprehended under this Name. But here *Zipporah* is called *Ethiopian* in Ridicule and Spight; which they ought not to have done, for she having submitted to

the Law ought to have been reckoned an *Israelite*, as *Ruth* and *Rahab* were.

(g) You. *Miriam* is called a Prophetess, *Exod.* xv. 20.

Miriam

Miriam being returned to the Camp, the *Israelites* removed to the Desert of *Paran*; from whence after several Incampments they came to *Kadesh-Barnea*, on the Frontiers of *Canaan*. Here *Moses* let them know that they were come near the promised Land: And for their Satisfaction, God commanded *Moses* to send twelve Men, one of each Tribe, to take a View of the Country. He charged them to go up to the Hills to observe whether the Country was strong or weak; whether there were many Inhabitants; how their Towns were situated, and whether fortified; whether the Soil was fertile or barren; whether it was planted with Trees or not; what Fruit they bore, and to bring some of it; for now was the Time when the first Grapes were ripe, that is, in *July*.

With these Instructions the twelve Spies set forward; and having taken a View of the Country from North to South, in their Return they passed thro' a fertile Valley which abounded in Vines, where they cut down a Branch with but one Cluster of Grapes on it, but that of so vast a Weight and Bigness, that they were forced to carry it upon a Staff between two. Nor was this the only Product of this happy Soil; the Golden Fig and beautiful Pomegranate adorn the Trees, and Variety of Fruits load the luxuriant Branches. Of each of these they take a Sample, and upon their leaving the Place, from the great Plenty of Grapes, they call it the Valley of *Eschol*, which signifies a Cluster of Grapes. Having spent forty Days in viewing and observing the Country, they return to the Camp of *Israel* at *Kadesh*; and having shewed the Fruits of the Land they had been surveying, to *Moses* and *Aaron*, and the whole Congregation, they related the Observations they had made in their Journey: " We have
 " been, *said they*, in the Country to which you sent us.
 " It is a fertile and plentiful Land; but the Inhabitants
 " of it are powerful: There are great Cities with strong
 " Walls. We have seen there Men of the Race of
 " *Anak*,

“ *Anak*, warlike Men, and of a gigantick Stature.
 “ The *Amalekites* inhabit the South-part of the Land;
 “ the *Hittites*, *Jebusites*, and *Amorites*, on the Mount-
 “ tains; and the *Canaanites* on the Sea-Coasts and the
 “ River *Jordan*.” This was a frightful Account to a
 timorous People, prepared already by their own Dis-
 contents to receive any ill Impression; which they im-
 mediately shewed: But *Caleb*, one of those that were
 sent to discover the Country, to pacify them, said,
 “ Let us make ourselves Masters of the Country, for
 “ we are strong enough to conquer those People.”
 But the Mutineers declared against engaging in a War,
 wishing they were in *Egypt* again; and choosing rather
 to die in the Wilderness, than to fall by the Sword,
 and have their Wives and Children enslaved. In short,
 they propose to choose themselves a Chief, and return
 to *Egypt*. This so deeply affected *Moses*, that notwith-
 standing they were so obstinately bent upon their own
 Ruin, he and *Aaron* in the Presence of the Assembly
 fell on their Faces to deprecate the Vengeance which
 they feared God would let fly at these rebellious Mu-
 tineers; whilst *Caleb* and *Jeshua*, thro’ Excess of Sor-
 row for the People’s Blasphemy, rending their Cloaths,
 boldly stood up, and endeavoured to persuade them
 that they might by God’s Help overcome the Inhabi-
 tants of that Country: “ The Land, *said they*, that
 “ we passed thro’ is indeed a rich and fertile Land,
 “ abounding with all Things necessary for Life. If we
 “ please the Lord, he will bring us into this Land, and
 “ give it us. Do not therefore by rebelling against
 “ him, forfeit his Promise and Protection: Nor be afraid
 “ of the People of the Land, whom we shall as surely
 “ conquer as we eat our Food, and as easily; for their
 “ God hath withdrawn his Care of them; and if the
 “ Lord continue it to you, ye have nothing to fear.”
 This Speech made so little Impression upon them, that
 in a tumultuous Manner they called out to stone them;
 and which they had probably done, had not God mira-
 culously

culously interposed by sending his Glory, which visibly appeared at that Instant in the Tabernacle of the Congregation before them all.

All this while *Moses* and *Aaron* lay prostrate on their Faces, and God being highly incensed with this Insolence of the *Israelites*, tells *Moses* he would send the Plague that should extirpate this People, and would make him Prince of a more numerous and powerful Nation. But good *Moses*, as he had before done, postpones his own private Advantage to the Honour of God, and the Good of this unworthy People, representing to the Lord, that if he destroyed the *Israelites*, the *Egyptians* and other Nations thereabout, who saw he had taken them into his Protection, would not fail to say he was not able to carry them into the Land he had promised them. Then imploring God's Mercy, and with repeated and importunate Intreaties begging Pardon for the People, God at length suffered himself to be prevailed on, and to satisfy *Moses*, he pronounced them pardon'd: But it was with this Restriction; for reproaching them with their vile Ingratitude, who had so often and wonderfully tasted of his Bounty in providing against their Wants, screening them from their Enemies, and preserving them in all Dangers; since they had so often provoked him with their Disobedience, he declared that not one of those who had murmured should enter into the promised Land, except *Caleb* and *Joshua*; and that they should wander about there with their Children for the Space of forty Years. And tho' God at the pressing Intreaty of *Moses* did reverse the Sentence of sudden Death upon the whole Congregation of Murmurers, yet the ten false Spies, the immediate Authors of this Rebellion, who had brought an evil Report upon the good Land, were punished with Death at that Time; for they died of the Plague before the Lord. But *Caleb* and *Joshua*, who had done their Duty in giving a faithful Account of their Journey and Observations they had made, were not only preserved alive, but commended of God,

who gave them his Promise that they should live to enter into the good Land, and take Possession of it.

Moses having reported these Things to the Children of *Israel*, they are said to have mourn'd greatly: But by their Actions it doth not appear they were any better disposed; for changing their Minds on a sudden from a poor cowardly Fearfulness to a presumptuous Rashness, they said the next Morning, "We are ready to go to the Place whereof the Lord hath spoken to us." But this was undertaken in their rebellious obstinate Temper, and was adding Sin to Sin. Which *Moses* well knew; for he endeavoured to restrain them, and expostulated the Danger with them; told them their Enterprize was against the express Command of God; that it would not prosper; forbid them going, upon pain of being defeated and slain; assured them, that God had left them, and that the *Amalekites* and *Canaanites* had gain'd the Passes in the Mountains before them. These Admonitions have no Weight with these obstinate People: They presumptuously suppose the Boldness of the Attempt will wipe off their former Cowardice, and re-instate them in God's Favour; and tho' the Ark of the Lord, which was to go before the Host, went not with them, nor *Moses* their General at the Head of them, yet they resolutely marched to the top of the Hills, where the Enemy surprised, defeated, and slew many of them, and pursued the rest as far as *Horma*.

Alter this, tho' it was but (b) eleven Days Journey from *Horeb* to *Kadesh-Barnea*, yet the People through their Disobedience spent the best part of two Years in going that eleven Days Journey. And which is still more strange, turning back from *Kadesh-Barnea*, and being near the Confines of the promised Land, they were (i) eight and thirty Years more wandering in the Wilderness before they could come to the Borders of

(b) Eleven. See *Deut.* ii. 2.

(i) Eight and thirty, &c. See *Deut.* ii. 14.

the promised Land again. *Moses* having led them back into the Defart towards the *Red Sea*, they continued thereabout, making in the aforesaid Time eighteen several Removes or Dislodgments, and at last they returned to *Kadesh-Barnea*, near the Place from whence they went.

Whilst they were in the Wilderness many remarkable Occurrences befel them. The first of which is of a Man, who by a post-fact Law was adjudged to be stoned to Death for violating the Sabbath by gathering Sticks on that Day, the Celebration of which God had strictly enjoined: And tho' there was no Penalty annexed to the Breach of it, those who brought the Offender before *Moses*, knew he would determine justly; and committing the Man to safe Custody, *Moses* enquired of God what he should do in this Case, who immediately from his heavenly Oracle returned this Answer, "That the Criminal should be conveyed without the Camp, and there be stoned to Death." Which was accordingly executed.

And now Pride and Malice blow up a Faction into a Flame, and give great Disquiet to the Peace of *Israel*. The haughty *Corah*, Great-Grandson of *Levi*, separates from *Moses* and *Aaron*; and having seduced *Dathan* and *Abiram*, Sons of *Eliab*, of *Reuben's* Family, and drawn in two hundred and fifty *Levites* to his Party, that were Men of Fame and Interest among the People, he made most grievous Complaint against *Moses* and *Aaron*, charging them with Pride in usurping upon the Liberties of the People, who, they said, were as holy as themselves. *Moses* hearing this (*k*) fell on his

(*k*) *Fell, &c.* This is a Phrase often used to express Divine Adoration and Application to God for Help; and good Reason there is to believe that at this Time *Moses*, who was well acquainted with the gracious and ready Assistance of God in time of Need, might apply himself to the Lord for Protection against this mutinous Crew, as apprehending some Violence from them, who in this tumultu-

ous Manner attacked him. And it is very reasonable to think that, whilst he lay in this humble Posture, God appeared to him, and both comforted and advised him; for presently after we read, *Numb. xvi. 5.* that with great Assurance he spoke to the Rebels, and, to vindicate himself, put the Matter between him and them upon Trial the next Day.

Face, and soon after rising from that humble Posture, he with great Courage and Assurance let them know that the next Day the Lord would decide the Controversy, and would make appear who were his Servants, and who was holy, and would admit whom he had chosen to come near him. Then with his usual Calmness and Serenity of Mind he argued the Matter with them; he mildly rebuked their Insolence, and told them that they took too much upon them. But in a more particular Manner addressing himself to *Corah*, and the *Levites* that joined him, he said: “Hear me ye Sons of
“ of *Levi*: Is it a Matter of so light Concern, that the
“ God of *Israel* hath distinguished you from the rest of
“ *Israel*, to admit you to the more immediate Service
“ of the Tabernacle, and to stand before the Congre-
“ gation, and minister to them? Is not this an Ho-
“ nour sufficient to satisfy your ambitious Spirit, but
“ that ye must aim at the Priesthood too? This is the
“ Cause of your Clamours, and for this ye have moved
“ the People to Sedition. But be assured, whatever ye
“ may pretend against *Aaron*, this Insult is against the
“ Lord; and it is against his Dispensations that ye
“ murmur and conspire.” *Dathan* and *Abiram* stood
at a Distance whilst *Moses* talked with the rest, and therefore he sent for them to come to him; but they furlily returned Answer, that they would not come. And to retort his own Expressions upon himself, they add, “Is it a Matter of so small Moment, that thou
“ hast brought us up out of a Land that flowed with
“ Plenty, to kill us in the Desert? Thou affectest Do-
“ minion, and wouldst make thyself Prince of us also.
“ Notwithstanding thy fair Promises, thou hast not
“ brought us into a Land that floweth with Milk and
“ Honey, nor given us Inheritance of Fields and Vine-
“ yards; but when we were ready to take Possession of
“ the promised Land, thou hast turned us back into this
“ barren Desert, to repeat the Fatigues and Hardships
“ we had before undergone: We will not come.”
These

NUMBERS CHAP. XVII. 40
The punishment of Korah, Dathan & Abiram.



NUMBERS 16. Verse 32.
*And the earth opened her mouth, and
swallowed them up, and their houses,
with all that appertained unto them.*

These unjust Reproaches highly provoked *Moses*, who instead of returning any ill Language to them, addressing himself to God, said, “Respect not thou their
 “Offering; for tho’ they reflect thus unjustly upon
 “me, I have not taken so much as an Afs from them,
 “neither have I hurt one of them.” Then summoning *Corab* and all his Company to meet him and *Aaron* before the Lord the next Day, he ordered them to bring their Censers ready prepared with Incense in them, and to appear all before the Lord. Accordingly on the Morrow they came with great Confidence; and having set Fire to the Incense in their Censers, they boldly plant themselves in the Door of the Tabernacle with *Moses* and *Aaron*; and to bid the greater Defiance to these holy Men, they had persuaded all the Congregation to side with them. This daring Carriage of the Mutineers so provoked the Almighty, that he resolves to take the Matter into his own Hand; and darting forth his Glory upon the Tabernacle, he commands *Moses* and *Aaron* to withdraw, that he might consume the Rebels. But the two good Men, knowing that the People were drawn into this Insolence by the wicked Arts of *Corab* and his Party, prostrate themselves before the Lord, and by their Prayers intercede for the People; “O God, thou God of the Spirits of all Flesh, said
 “they, shall one Man sin, and wilt thou be angry with
 “all?” Their Prayers are heard as soon as delivered, and God bids them command the People to withdraw; who, frightened with the amazing Splendor that broke from the Cloud, readily take the Warning, and draw off from the Tents of *Corab*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, who came boldly out, and stood daring at the Doors of their Tents with their Wives and Families. Then *Moses* addressing himself to the People, said, “By this
 “you shall know that the Lord has commissioned me
 “to do what I have done, and that I have undertaken
 “nothing of my own Head. If these Men die the
 “common way of Nature, or be visited as other Men,
 Q 3 “they

“ then take it for granted, the Lord hath not sent me :
 “ But if he deal with them after a strange and unusual
 “ Manner, and the Earth opening her Mouth swallow
 “ them up alive, then shall ye understand that these
 “ Men have provoked the Lord.” *Moses* had no sooner
 spoken these Words, but terrible Convulsions heave
 the labouring Earth, the Surface of which cleaving a-
 funder, *Corah* and his Faction, with their Goods and
 (l) Families, were swallowed up alive, and the Ground
 closing upon them they perished. The rest of the Peo-
 ple that stood round them, and saw their dismal Fate,
 being frightened with the loud Cries and Shrieks of the
 departing Mutineers, fled away for fear the Earth
 should have swallowed them too. In the mean Time
 God, to compleat his Vengeance on the rest of the
 Leaders in this Rebellion, who had profanely attempted
 to offer Incense contrary to the Law, sent down Fire
 from Heaven, and destroyed the two hundred and fifty
 Men that had joined with *Corah*. The (m) Censers, on
 which they intended to offer, remained amidst the Con-
 flagration ; which God ordered to be preserved, but
 not for the same Use, as formerly, nor in the same
 Form : Therefore he commanded *Moses* to direct *Elee-
 zer*, *Aaron*’s Son, to beat them out into broad Plates,
 and fix them to the Altar of the Burnt-Offerings ; af-
 signing this Reason for it, “ That it might be for a
 “ Memorial to the Children of *Israel*, that no Stranger,
 “ or any that was not of *Aaron*’s Family, should pre-
 “ sume to offer Incense before the Lord, lest he died
 “ the Death of *Corah* and his Company.”

(l) Families. Except some of *Corah*’s
 Sons. See *Numb.* xxvi. 11.

(m) Censers. The two hundred and fifty
 Princes had not offered any Incense, be-
 ing prevented by Death : However, it
 may be presumed that they had lighted
 their Incense at the holy Fire ; by which
 they obtained (at least in the Opinion of
 the People) a sort of Consecration. The
 Lord therefore, to keep up among them
 the Reputation and Esteem of Things
 devoted, would not have them put to
 profane Uses : And to make a Difference

between his own Institutions and Men’s
 Contrivances (especially those of wick-
 ed Men) he ordered all those Brazen
 Censers to be wrought into broad Plates,
 and to cover the Altar with them ; to
 the Intent, that these Brazen Plates be-
 ing polished bright, might by their Lus-
 tre put the People in mind of the Offence
 of those that were once the Owners of
 them ; and by seeing them often (as
 they must do every Time they looked
 upon the Altar) they might be warned
 of the same Crime.

So

So visible a Punishment, one would think, might have been sufficient to deter the *Israelites*, and keep them within the Limits of due Obedience for the future; but it affected them only for the present, for from this Judgment the next Day they took occasion to mutiny afresh, murmuring against *Moses* and *Aaron*, and charging them with the Murder of so many Persons. They well knowing the unruly Nature of this obstinate People, and fearing to what degree of Madness and Violence they might have proceeded, took (n) Sanctuary in the Tabernacle; where as soon as they had enter'd, the Cloud cover'd it, and the Glory of the Lord appeared; which was a sure Token that the Lord had something to say to them. Immediately God called to *Moses* and *Aaron*, and bid them be gone from the rest of the Congregation, for he would consume them in a Moment. They thereupon fell down, as they used to do on such Occasions, to intercede for the People; but, as early as they were in supplicating, Vengeance was before them; for the Lord, provoked by their repeated Rebellions, had already sent a (o) Plague among them. Which *Moses* perceiving, bid *Aaron* take a Censer, and put Fire in it from the Altar, and Incense, and hasten to the Congregation to make an Atonement for them. *Aaron* did as *Moses* directed him, and standing between the dead and the living, he pray'd for the People, and the Plague ceased. However, in that short Space of Time that this Plague raged among them, there died fourteen thousand seven

(n) *Sanctuary*. This shews to whom we ought to fly in any Persecution or Distress; and that God is our only Refuge and Protection. Whence the great Fruit and Advantage of Persecution appears, that it compels us to apply to him.

(o) *Plague*. Commentators are generally silent in their Opinion what this Plague was. Plague is a comprehensive Term, as we see in the Plagues of *Egypt*, which are all called Plagues, tho' they were all different from each other. We may reasonably think that it was the

Pestilence or infectious Sickness; and not Fire, as *Cornel. à Lap.* and *Abulens.* would have it, who are the only Commentators that pretend to define it. The *Septuagint* likewise render it by a general Word, *Toraustis*, signifying no more than *Breaking forth*, or *Raging*, Numb. xvi. 46, and 50. That it was a Pestilence, the *Chaldee Paraphrase* seems to hint, in the Complaint of the *Israelites*, Numb. xvii. 12. *We die by the Sword, the Earth swalloweth us up, and the Pestilence consumeth us.*

hundred Men, without reckoning those who perished in the Sedition with *Corah* and his Company.

God having in so dreadful a Manner declared against those who opposed the Government of *Moses*, and the Priesthood of *Aaron*, to end all Contests and Disputes among the Ambitious and Aspiring, resolved by a convincing Miracle to put an End to the Controversy, and establish and confirm the Priesthood in the Family in which he had placed it. In order to this, he commanded *Moses* to take a Rod from each Tribe, and to write upon it the Name of the Prince of that Tribe to which it belonged; and on the Rod of the Tribe of *Levi* to write *Aaron's* Name; which when he had done, he was to lay up these twelve Rods in the Tabernacle, before the Ark of the Testimony, where God was to declare his Will farther to them. And to let them know that God would determine the Controversy, and put an End to their Murmurings, he would cause the Rod of that Man to blossom whom he would choose.

Moses pursues this Direction, and taking a Rod from the Prince of each Tribe, wrote his Name upon it, and laid up all the Rods together in the Tabernacle. And the next Day he went in and brought forth all the Rods, and in the Presence of all the People he gave each Man his Rod, which they found to be the same as they had delivered to *Moses* over Night, except *Aaron's*, which had not only budded, but blossom'd, and bare ripe Almonds. This was a convincing Proof, that God had singled out *Aaron* to the Priestly Office. To preserve the Memory therefore of the Determination of this Controversy, the Lord bid *Moses* bring *Aaron's* Rod back again, and lay it before the Ark of the Tabernacle, to be kept for a Memorial of their Rebellion, and that seeing it they might forbear to murmur, and so prevent their Death.

And now they began to recollect their Deserts, and the Causes of their Punishment; and since God in his own House visited them for their Sins, they enumerated
the

the (p) several ways they had been punished. Behold, said they, we die; we perish; we are all lost. And because God had in the Tabernacle expressed his Displeasure more than once in punishing them in an exemplary Manner, they cried out, If we approach the Tabernacle we die; not considering, that their own Iniquities drew the Justice of God upon them in this Place, for which he had ordered the Altar to be cover'd with (q) remarkable shining Brass, to put them in mind of their Obedience.

(r) The next historical Matter we meet with is the *Israelites* being at *Kadesh*; where *Miriam* (who was Sister to *Aaron* and *Moses*, and (s) elder than both) died, and was buried there. In this Place the *Israelites*, impatient of any Inconveniency, for want of Water began (as usually) to exclaim against *Moses* and *Aaron*; saying,

(p) *Several.* The *Chaldee* Text describeth their Murmurings thus: We die by the Sword; as in the Case of their daring to enter the promised Land contrary to *Moses's* Advice, when they were slain by the *Canaanites* and *Amorites*. The Earth swalloweth us up, as in the Case of *Corab* and his Associates. The Pestilence doth consume us; as in the Case of the fourteen thousand seven hundred that died of it.

(q) *Remarkable.* As being made of the Brazen Censers, which belonged to the Two hundred and fifty Princes that had joined *Corab*.

(r) *The next, &c.* The History breaks off at the seventeenth Chapter of *Numbers*, and begins not again till the twentieth. In the eighteenth Chapter is set forth the Charge of the Priests and *Levites* distinctly, with the Portions or Provisions of Maintenance for each. In which, among other Things, it is to be observed, that the Priests had for their Portion the Offerings of the People, the Meat-Offerings, Sin-Offerings, Trespass-Offerings, Heave-Offerings, Wave-Offerings, First-Fruits, and the Tithes of the Tithes, which they were to receive from the *Levites* who received the Tithes from the People. And these Tithes of Tithes, which the Priests were to receive from the *Levites*, were to be offer'd by the *Levites* as Heave-Offering to the Lord; as the Tithes themselves, which were given to the *Levites*, were offer'd as Heave-offering to the Lord before. So that all the Tithes, as well

those from the People to the *Levites*, as those out of them from the *Levites* to the Priests, were by this Ceremony of Heaving render'd as compleatly a Part of the Ceremonial Law, as the rest of the Offerings under that Dispensation were. The nineteenth Chapter of *Numbers* treateth of legal Pollutions and Uncleanesses, and of the Water of Separation or Purification, by which unclean Persons were to be cleansed, directing how it should be made and used: Which Water was a lively Type of the Blood of Christ; who being himself perfectly clean, by sprinkling cleanseth the Unclean.

By the Interposition of these Matters in these two Chapters, we miss the Account how the *Israelites* came to *Kadesh* again in the Wilderness of *Zin*; where we find them in *Ch. xx.* Only *Moses*, briefly reciting some of their Frauds in *Deut. ii.* tells us, That after they had been beaten by the *Amalekites* and *Amorites*, they turn'd and took their Way in the Wilderness along the *Red Sea*, as God had commanded *Moses*, *Numb. xiv. 25.* and compassed *Mount Seir* many Days; (which both *Tremellius* and our Bible in their Notes reckon eight and thirty Years) till at length the Lord said, *Ye have compassed this Mountain long enough, turn ye Northward, Deut. ii. 3.*

(s) *Elder.* That she was elder than *Moses*, appears from *Exod. ii. 4.* where she is said to be left to watch him when he was exposed in the Ark of Rushes,

Why

“ Why have ye brought the Lord’s People into the
 “ Wilderiness to kill them and their Cattle? Why did
 “ you persuade us to leave the fertile Land of *Egypt* to
 “ bring us into this barren Place, which affords neither
 “ Water to quench our Thirst, nor Fruits to satisfy
 “ our Hunger? Would to God we had perished with
 “ our Brethren before the Lord.” *Moses* and *Aaron* in
 these Difficulties, as before, address themselves to God
 for Help; who bids *Moses* take the Rod, and that he
 and *Aaron* should assemble the People; and then, said
 the Lord, “ Speak ye to the Rock in their Sight, and
 “ it shall yield Water for them.” *Moses* hereupon tak-
 ing the (t) Rod from before the Lord went, and with *Aa-*
ron’s Assistance assembled the People together before the
 Lord. *Moses* hitherto had paid an exact and absolute
 Obedience to all the Commands God had injoin’d him;
 but now in deviating from his Instructions, tho’ seem-
 ingly but a little, he committed the greatest Miscarriage
 of his whole Life: For he was bid to speak to the Rock
 before the People; but instead of doing it, he speaks to
 the People, saying, “ Hear now, ye Rebels! Must we
 “ fetch Water for you out of the Rock?” In which he
 not only expressed Impatience and Heat of Spirit, but
 Incredulity, making a Doubt of what God had posi-
 tively promised. It is certain he disobeyed God in this;
 for he (u) smote the Rock twice with the Rod, and
 imme-

(t) *Rod*. The Text does not expressly tell us, whether of the Rods this was; that with which he did so many Miracles in *Egypt* formerly, or that by which they were so lately reclaimed from a Rebellion: It seems most likely to be the latter; because in *Numb. xx. 9.* it is called *the Rod from before the Lord*, and which yet bore a Miracle upon it, the Buds and Almonds. But be it which of them we will imagine, the Design of the Lord’s bidding *Moses* to take the Rod was, that the People, at the Sight of it, might see their Error, repent, and confess that nothing was too hard for their God.

(u) *Smote*. If it should be alledg’d in

Favour of *Moses*, That when he was sent to the Rock before, *Exod. xvii. 5, 6.* he was bid to take his Rod in his Hand, and smite the Rock, that the Water might come forth; and that from thence he might infer, he was also now to smite the Rock with his Rod: It may be said, That as he then followed his Instruction, so he was to have done here. He smote the Rock then, because he was bid; but he did not speak to it, because he was not bid: So now he should have spoken to it, because he was bid; and not have smitten it, because he was not bid. Those Expositors, who seem most to excuse this Diffidence of *Moses*, impute it to his great Age, (old Age being naturally prone to Choler and

immediately there issued out Water in great Plenty : By which we may see, God would not lose the Honour of his Miracle for his Servant's Fault, but caused the Water to flow from the Rock. But to shew he expected an intire Obedience to his Commands, tho' *Moses* had been his faithful Servant in performing all his Instructions before, yet now, for the Breach of his Obedience, he denounces to *Moses* and *Aaron* (who. was in the same Transgression with him) their Doom in these Words : “ Because ye believ'd me not, to (w) sanctify “ me in the Sight of the Children of *Israel*, therefore “ you shall not have the Honour of leading the People “ into the (x) Land which I have given them.” From this unhappy Accident, the Place was called *Meribah*, which signifies, The Water of Contradiction.

Moses being thus reprimanded, humbly submits, but continued in his Command and Care of the People; and intending to decamp, that he might secure their March from *Kadesh*, he sent an Embassy to the King of *Edom* (upon whose Borders they now were) to inform him of the Travels and Labours of the *Israelites*; desiring Leave to pass thro' his Country, on account that they were both

and Impatience) and that he being provoked at this fresh Murmuring, in Diffidence struck the Rock ; not that he doubted of the Power of God, or his Faithfulness in performing his Promise of producing Water out of it (for in his and *Aaron's* Speech to the People he taxes them with Incredulity) but he question'd whether God would think so rebellious and incredulous a People worthy of a Miracle, who had slighted, and so soon forgotten the many and late Deliverances they had receiv'd from his bountiful Hand, that never yet failed to relieve them in any Distress ; or whether God, so justly provoked, had promised ironically, or sarcastically, or conditionally, that if the *Israelites* would cease to murmur, he would send them Water. And that therefore he struck the Rock with Diffidence, believing it impossible, or improbable, that such incredulous Wretches deserv'd a Miracle. But these are mere Conjectures and Suppositions ; for God is an absolute Sovereign, and ex-

pects an absolute Obedience in his Commands. Nor will he allow even his Favourite Servant *Moses* to vary from his Command, or mix his own Conceptions with it unpunished.

(w) *Sanctify*. That is, you should shew them that I am holy, omnipotent, merciful, and true ; and that I can and would perform my Promise to this wicked and ungrateful People, as ye know, and ought to remember I have often done.

(x) *Land*. This was the very Land of *Canaan* on the other Side of *Jordan* ; for *Moses* did afterwards enter the promised Land on this Side of *Jordan* ; when he took the Kingdoms of *Sidon* and *Og*, which he gave to the Tribes of *Reuben* and *Gad*, and to the half Tribe of *Manasseh*. This was a sore Mortification to *Moses* not to see the promised *Canaan*, being thereby frustrated of the Fruit of his long and troublesome Conduct. By which we ought to learn to die to the World and ourselves, and live only to God.

descended

descended from *Isaac* and *Rebecca*; assuring him that they would commit no Acts of Hostility, nor trespass in his Fields or Vineyards, nor so much as drink of his Water, without paying for it, but only travel on the King's Highway. The surly *Edomite* not only refus'd them Passage, but with a potent Army came out to defend his Frontiers, and oppose the *Israelites*, should they attempt to pass. They therefore turn'd another Way, and marching from *Kadesh* came to Mount *Hor*, near the Borders of *Edom*. And now the Time drawing near, that the Children of *Israel* were to enter the promised Land, into which the Lord had told *Aaron* he should not enter, because of his Transgression at *Meribah*, God gave *Aaron* notice of his approaching Death, and commanded *Moses* to take *Aaron* and *Eleazer* his Son, who was to succeed him in the Office of High-Priest, to the Mount, there to strip *Aaron* of his Priestly Garments, and put them upon *Eleazer* his Son. Which when *Moses* had done, *Aaron* died on the Top of Mount *Hor*, being a hundred twenty and three Years old. And when the People saw that *Aaron* was dead, they bewailed him thirty Days.

It was the Beginning of the fifth Month of the fortieth Year of their Travels from *Egypt*, when they were upon the Borders of *Canaan*; and *Arad*, one of the Kings of *Canaan*, that dwelt in the South, hearing which Way they came, went out and fought them, and took some of them Prisoners. This Defeat brought them to a Sense of their Duty; and knowing they were now upon the Borders of the promised Land, they made a Vow to the Lord, promising that if he would deliver this People into their Hands, they would utterly destroy their Cities. God takes them at their Word, and gave them such Success, that at (y) *Hormah* they engaged these *Canaanites*, and defeated them, took their Cities, and utterly destroyed them.

(y) *Hormah*. See *Judges* i. 17. This seems to be the same Place to which the *Israelites* about eight and thirty Years before, *Numb.* xiv. 45. *Amalekites* had beaten and chased the

Flush'd with this Victory, they dislodg'd from Mount *Hor*, and took their way by the *Red-Sea*, marching round *Edom*, thro' which they had been (z) denied Passage, and forbidden to (a) force their Way. And because the Way was long, the Passes uneasy, and the Country barren, they, forgetting their late Success, and reflecting only on the present Discouragements, relapse into their old Humour of murmuring, complaining directly against God and *Moses*: "Wherefore, *say they*, have ye brought
 " us up out of *Egypt*, to die in the Wilderness, where
 " there is neither Meat, nor Drink, but this (b) *Manna*,
 " which our Stomachs loathe?" God seeing them thus forgetful of the many and repeated Acts of his Providence, punishes this bold Impiety of theirs, by sending fiery Serpents amongst them, which destroy'd a great Number of these Rebels. This Punishment brought the rest to their Senses, who flying to injured *Moses*, acknowledge their Guilt, and cry for Mercy: Who, though he had lately incurred the Displeasure of the Lord on their Account, in Pity to their Distress, addresses himself in Prayer to God for them; who did not immediately take away the Serpents, but leaving them to be a farther Scourge, and make them more sensible of their Transgression, provided a Remedy to prevent their Death, and heal their Hurts: For he order'd *Moses* to make a (d) Serpent of a fiery Colour, and to set it up on a high Pole, that the People, who were bitten by the fiery Serpents, might, by looking up

(z) *Denied.* See *Numb.* xx. 18, 21.

(a) *Force.* See *Deut.* ii. 5.

(b) *Manna.* This is the same Complaint which they made before. See *Numb.* xi. 6.

(c) *Fiery.* These Serpents were not so by Nature, but by the Effect of their Biting, which caused a great Inflammation, or Burning, in all those that were bitten by them.

(d) *Serpent.* This *Brazen Serpent* (a significant Type of our Lord Jesus Christ, who being lifted up as an *Ensign for the Nations*, *Isa.* xi. 12. gives Life and Salvation to all them, that in true Faith look up to him) remained among the

Jerus above 700 Years, to the Time of *Alexekiah* King of *Judah*; who in a holy Zeal, pursuant to God's Command, *Ezra* xxiii. 24. *Deut.* vii. 5. removing the high Places, breaking the Images, and cutting down the Groves, brake also in Pieces this *Brazen Serpent* among the rest; (tho' *Moses* by the express Command of God had made it, and was so valuable a Piece of Antiquity) because he found the People had for a long Time committed Idolatry, in burning Incense to it. And to put a Contempt upon it, he called it *Nehushtan*, a Piece of Brass only; 2 *Kings* xviii. 4.

to it be recovered. *Moses* accordingly made the Form of a Serpent in Brass, and set it up as a Banner; and whoever afterwards was bitten by a Serpent, if he looked upon that Brazen Serpent, recovered.

The *Israelites* at this Time were at *Phanon*, whither they were come from *Salmona*, their first Camp, after they removed from about Mount *Hor*. From *Phanon* they went and incamped at *Oboth*, and thence to *Jieabarim*, in the Defart that is before *Moab* to the Eastward. Decamping from thence they came to *Zared*, and afterwards incamped by the River of *Arnon*, which is in the Defart, and runs to the Frontiers of the *Amorites*; for it divides them from the *Moabites*. They held on their March, and at length came into the Plains of *Moab*, on the Banks of *Jordan*, opposite to *Jericho*, to the Top of *Pisgab*. From hence *Moses* sent Ambassadors to *Sihon* King of the *Amorites*, to demand a Passage thro' his Country, promising not to break into the Fields or Vineyards, nor to drink of the Water, but only to march along the Highway, till they were past his Country. The *Amorite* Prince, not thinking it safe to receive so numerous and unsettled a People into the Heart of his Kingdom, positively denied them Passage: And thinking it better Policy to attack than be attack'd, gathering what Force he could, marches out to give them Battle at *Jabaz*, where *Israel* routed him, and seiz'd his Country. They likewise took *Heshbon*, and the Villages about it, which *Sihon* had before taken from the *Moabites*; and being thus possessed of the *Amorites* Land, they dwelt there. After this, *Moses* sent out Forces to discover *Jazar*, another City of the *Amorites*, which they took with all its Territories, and drove out the People that dwelt there. Then turning another Way, they marched towards *Basban*, where the (e) Giant *Og*, another *Amorite* King,

(e) *Giant*. The Description of this Gigantick King, who was the last of the Race of the Giants, we have in *Deut. iii. 11, &c.* whose Stature we may guess at by the Size of his Bed, which being made

of Iron for Strength, was nine Cubits in Length, and four Cubits in Breadth, after the Cubit of a Man, which being the common Cubit, containing half a Yard, or one Foot and a half of *English* Measure,

King, reigned. This monstrous Prince, with his Gigantick Troops, drew out to give the *Israelites* Battle. But lest they should be discouraged at the Sight of this formidable Army, who exceeded the common Size of Nature, *Moses* by the Command of God bid them fear nothing, for he had delivered them into their Hands, and they should make as easy a Conquest over them, as they did over *Sihon* King of the *Amorites*. *Israel* thus encouraged joined Battle, and slew King *Og* and his Sons, and all his People. They also took all his Cities, threescore in Number, all fenced with high Walls, Gates and Bars, besides open Towns and Villages a great many; destroying utterly the Inhabitants, but keeping all the Cattle and the Spoil of those Cities for a Prey to themselves, as they had done before in the (f) Case of *Sihon*, the other *Amorite* King.

Encouraged with these Successes the *Israelites* march to the Plains of *Moab*, and incamp on this side *Jordan* by *Jericbo*. The Approach of these victorious Strangers strikes a Terror wherever they come, and the Fame of their late Success against the *Amorites* put the King of *Moab* and his People into a terrible (g) Consternation.

sure, if reduced to Yards or Feet, will make four Yards and a half, or thirteen Feet and a half, for the Length, and two Yards, or six Feet, for the Breadth of the Bed.

(f) Case. See *Deut.* iii. 4, 5, 6, 7. and so they were commanded, *Deut.* xx. where the *Fecial Laws*, or Laws of War and Heraldry, are set down: By which they were required, upon their Approach to any City, to offer Peace first; which if the Inhabitants accepted, and surrendered to them, they should only make them Tributaries. But if they refused Peace, and put them to besiege and storm the Place, they should, when they had taken it, put all the Men to the Sword; but might keep the Women and Children with the Cattle and other Spoil for themselves. These were their Instructions for the Cities of remoter Countries; but for the Cities of those neighbouring People, which the Lord had given them for an Inheritance, as particularly the *Hittites* and *Amorites*, the *Canaanites* and

Perizzites, the *Hivites* and *Jebusites*, they were to save none alive, but utterly to destroy all the Men, Women, and Children. Now as this Execution was a Type of the spiritual Warfare against the Soul's Enemies; of which none, old or young, great or small, are to be spared, or saved alive; so the political Reason of this martial Severity is given in the 18th Verse of *Deut.* xx. *That they teach you not to do after their Abominations, which they have done unto their Gods; so should ye sin against the Lord your God.* So that this Severity seems to be a kind of Self-Defence; a Destroying of their Enemies, who were Idolaters, lest they should tempt and draw the *Israelites* to do that, which would provoke the Lord to destroy them.

(g) Consternation. If the *Moabites* had known the Protection they were under, they needed not to have been afraid, for, if they would have been quiet, they were particularly exempted from the Sword of *Israel*, *Deut.* ii. 9.

Balak the King, knowing himself too weak to engage the mighty Force of *Israel*, advised with the Chiefs of (*b*) *Midian*, to whom he proposed the common Danger of these Invaders: The Result of their Consultation was this; King *Balak* should send Messengers to (*i*) *Balaam* the Son of *Beor*, who lived at *Petbor*, a City in *Mesopotamia*, to invite and bribe him to curse the *Israelites*; for they had so great an Opinion of his Skill and Power in Divination, that they thought he could curse or bless as he pleased. By general Consent therefore they depute a select Number of their chief Men with Presents to invite him to go with them to *Balak*. When they came to him, and had delivered their Message from the King, he desired them to tarry with him that Night, for he could give them no Answer till he had consulted the Lord.

God, who knew the sordid Mind of *Balaam*, to try how he would represent the Matter, ask'd him, "What Men they were, that were with him? They are some said he, whom the King of *Moab* hath sent to me, to let me know, that there is a People come out of *Egypt*, which cover the Face of the Earth; and to desire me to come to him, and curse them, in hopes that he then may be able to overcome them, and drive them away." But God said to him, "Thou shalt not go with them, nor curse that People, for they are blessed." *Balaam*, not daring to disobey the Command of the Lord, got up in the Morning, and dismissing the Messengers, said, "Be gone to your own Country; for the Lord refuseth to give me Leave to go with you." They return to the King, but misreport *Balaam's* Answer; for instead of telling him, that God had refused to let him come, they tell him, that *Balaam* refused to come. Whereupon *Balak* falsely suggesting to him-

(*b*) *Midian*. The *Midianites* were Neighbours and Confederates with the *Moabites*; therefore *Balak* represents to them the Danger, and asks their Advice and Assistance.

(*i*) *Balaam*. Several Fathers represent *Balaam* as a Wizard, and Prophet of the

Devil; but by the free Access he had to God, particularly *Numb.* xxiv. 13. and xxii. 18. he was not a Prophet of the Devil; tho' it is plain from the Holy Text he was covetous, and *St. Peter, Epist.* 2. *Ch.* ii. v. 15. says, *He loved the Wages of Unrighteousness.*

self,

self, that either the Number and Quality of his Messengers did not answer *Balaam's* Ambition; or the Value of the Presents his Covetousness, resolves to gratify both; and therefore he immediately dispatches away Messengers of more honourable Rank, and with larger Proposals. “Let nothing, *said he*, hinder thee from coming to me; for I will promote thee to very great Honour, and give thee whatsoever thou wilt ask, if thou wilt come and curse this People.”

Tho’ *Balaam* had received an express Command from the Mouth of God, neither to go, nor curse *Israel*; yet he did not disapprove of the Offer, only tells the Messengers, “If *Balak* would give me his House full of Silver and Gold, I cannot go beyond the Word of the Lord my God.” But to shew his wicked Inclination to the promised Reward, he fawningly intreats the Messengers to tarry all Night with him, that he might know what the Lord would say farther to him. This was tempting God; who therefore in Displeasure left him to his (*k*) own Will. He had positively at first told him his Mind, and it was the highest Disobedience and Presumption to pretend or offer at the reversing of it, by a farther Application. However, blinded with Covetousness and Pride, he again addressed himself to God; who provok’d at his Obstinacy leaves him to himself, and tells him, “If the Men come to call thee, (*l*) rise and go with them; but what I shall say to thee, that only shalt thou do.”

Notwithstanding this Permission to go, God was resolv’d to make *Balaam* sensible of his Displeasure. Upon

(*k*) *Own Will*. Thus God dealt with the *Israelites* afterwards, when they, rejecting his Government, would needs have a King, that they might be like other Nations, 1 *Sam.* viii. 7. He answered their Desire; but he did it in his Anger, *Hosea* xiii. 11. And at other Times, when they would not hearken to him, he gave them up to their own Hearts Lust, and let them walk in their own Counsels, *Psalms* xviii. 11, 12. From whence we may observe how unfit we are to choose for ourselves; especially in

Opposition to God’s immediate Commands and Instructions.

(*l*) *Rise, &c.* This by the Consent of Interpreters is looked upon, not as a Command but a Permission; and seems ironically spoken; as if God had said, “Since thou art so eager to go, though thou knowest it is against my Mind, take thy own Course; Go if thou wilt. But yet thou shalt not gain thy End; thou shalt go with this Restriction on thy Will, Thou shalt say nothing but what I shall direct thee.”

this Concession he got up in the Morning and went with the Princes of *Moab* : But as he was on the Road, the Angel of the Lord stood on the Way with a drawn Sword in his Hand. *Balaam's* Mind was so taken up with the Expectation of the Advantage he should make of this Expedition, that he thinks of nothing else; but it pleased God to give the Ass, on which *Balaam* rode, such Quickness of Sight, that she both saw the Angel and shun'd him, by turning out of the Road into the Field. *Balaam* for this beats the Ass, and struggling to put the Beast into the Way, the Angel stood in another narrow Way between two Walls, which inclosed some Vineyards. The Ass seeing the Angel, clung up to the Wall, and crush'd *Balaam's* Foot. This so incensed him, that he beat her again. But when the Angel went farther, and stood in a narrow Place, where the Ass could not turn, she fell down under him. For this *Balaam* was in a greater Passion than before, beating her with his Staff. But God, to rebuke the Wilfulness of the Prophet, miraculously open'd the Mouth of the Ass, and she said to him, "What have I done to thee, " that thou shouldest beat me these three Times? Because, *said he*, thou hast deserved it, in mocking " me: Had I a Sword in my Hand I would kill thee." The Ass reply'd, "Am not I thine Ass, upon which " thou hast been us'd to ride, ever since I was thine; " did I ever serve thee so before?" He answer'd, No. The Unusualness of this Accident, one would think, might have been an Admonition to *Balaam* to let him know, there was something more than common in the Ass's speaking; but his Resentment against the Ass for bruising his Foot and throwing him, and stopping him thus upon the Road, when he was in haste to be made rich and great, had so blinded him, that he thought nothing of it, till God himself opened his Eyes, and let him see the Angel standing in the Way with his Sword drawn in his Hand; at the Sight of which he bowed himself down, and fell on his Face. The An-

NUMBERS CHAP. XXII.

Balaam's asse speaketh.



NUMBERS 22. Verse 28.

*And y^e Lord opened y^e mouth of y^e asse, and she
said unto Balaam, what have I done unto thee,
that thou hast smitten me these three times?*

gel expostulates with him, tells him his Undertaking was perverse, in attempting to go against the express Command of God, and that therefore he was come to stop him; and but for his Afs, which he had so barbarously abused, he had slain him.

Balaam, convicted with this just Reproach, confesses his Sin, and faintly offered to turn back, if his Journey displeased the Lord. But this he needed not have said; for he knew well enough, that his Undertaking from the first displeased God, because at his first Address he was forbidden by him to go. However, the Lord resolved out of this Man's wicked Inclination to raise some Advantage; and therefore, since he was gone so far, he would not send him back, but make him, who was hired to curse, be the Instrument of pronouncing a Blessing on his People. Having thus chastised *Balaam* on the Way, he suffered him to go on, but with this Charge, that he should only speak what God should tell him.

Balaam thus dismiss'd, went on his Journey with the Princes of *Moab*; and when *Balak* understood that *Balaam* was coming, that he might the more oblige him by personal Civilities, he came out to meet him, himself receiving him upon the Confines of his Dominion. At their Meeting, the King in a friendly Manner blamed *Balaam* for refusing to come to him upon his first sending, since it was in his Power to advance him: But *Balaam*, to excuse himself, let him know what Restraint the Lord had laid upon him. Then entertaining him publickly with his Princes and great Men that Day, the next Day he brought him up into the (m) High Places of (n) *Baal*, that from thence he might take a View of the Camp of *Israel*. Whilst they were here, the Prophet directs the

(m) *High Places*. The Scripture calls *Higb*, those Eminences and Groves which the idolatrous Nations consecrated to their Gods, and where they in a brutish and lascivious Manner, solac'd themselves.

(n) *Baal*. Some will have the Temple

of *Baal* to be in those High Places, others the Statue. As to the Word *Baal*, it is sometimes a proper Name (as here, in this Place) sometimes it is the common Name of Idols: Thus the *Phœnicians* called their God *Baal*. The *Babylonians* theirs, *Bel*, or *Belus*; which is the same.

King to order(o) seven Altars to be erected for him there; and seven Oxen with seven Rams to be prepared. Which being done, they both together offered an Ox and a Ram upon each Altar. Then leaving *Balak* to stand by his Burnt-Offering, *Balaam* withdrew to consult the Lord, who meets and instructs him what to say; and returning to *Balak*, whom he found standing at the Altar, and the Princes of *Moab* with him, he thus addressed himself to them: “Thou hast caused me, “O King, to come from (p) *Aram*, out of the Mountains of the East, to curse the Family of *Jacob*, and “bid Defiance to *Israel*. But how shall I curse those, “whom God hath not cursed? and how shall I defy “those, whom the Lord hath not defied? From the “Top of the Rocks I see their Protector, and from the “Hills I behold him. Behold, this People shall be separated to God, and distinguish’d from all other People in Religion, Laws, and Course of Life: They shall “not be reckon’d among the Nations.” Then setting forth the Prosperity and Increase of *Israel*, he wished that his Lot might be with them in Life and Death.

Balak was offended at this Answer, and in a passionate Haste asks, “What hast thou done? I sent for thee to “curse my Enemies, and thou hast blessed them.” *Balaam* (q) excused himself by the Necessity of his Instructions, from which at this Time it was not in his Power to deviate. However, *Balak* is not discouraged; from the Change of the Place he hopes a Change of Fortune, or better Success; and therefore taking *Balaam* into the Field of *Zophim* to the Top of *Pisgab*, he tries whether

(o) *Seven*. The Number *Seven* was esteemed sacred among the *Israelites* (from whom probably *Balaam* might have learnt it) as appears in *Lev. iv. 6.* where the Priest is said to sprinkle the Blood of the Bullock seven Times before the Veil of the Sanctuary.

(p) *Aram*. The same as *Mesopotamia*, which the *Hebrews* call *Aram Nabaraim*.

(q) *Excus’d*. From *Balaam*’s Excuse, *Numb. xxiii. 12.* some interpret, as if he

would have cursed the *Israelites*, if he could: And indeed, if we consider what *Moses* told the *Israelites*, *Deut. xxiii. 5.* *Nevertheless, the Lord thy God would not barken unto Balaam, but turned the Curse into a Blessing to thee*; we may well conclude, that *Balaam* did earnestly labour with God, by Persuasion or Intreaty, to have had Liberty to have cursed the Children of *Israel*.

he can curse from thence. *Balaam*, who was willing to please him, had seven Altars there, and a Bullock and a Ram offered on each. Then withdrawing again, as before, to consult the Lord, he received fresh Instructions. *Balak* now began to understand the Interview between the Lord and *Balaam*, and upon his Return to him and his Attendants, who were big with Expectation of the Result, demanded what the Lord had spoken? Upon which *Balaam*, to bespeak the greater Attention and Regard to what he should say, began thus. “ Consider, “ O *Balak*, thou Son of *Zippor*, consider, that God, “ who hath already blessed *Israel*, and forbidden me to “ curse them, is not like a Man, that he should re- “ nounce his Promise, or repent of what he does. Hath “ he promised, and shall he not perform? Or hath he “ spoken, and shall he not make it good? Behold I have “ received Commission to bless, and he hath blessed, and “ I cannot reverse it. (r) He does not approve of Afflictions

(r) *He does, &c.* These Words in *Numb.* xxiii. 21. are rendered thus: *He hath seen none Iniquity in Jacob, nor Transgression in Israel.* Which cannot be the true Sense of the Place, for they give occasion to *Libertines* to imagine that God looks with Indifference on the Sins of Men, when they are thus rendered. Others think that he overlooks and winks at the Sins of his own People; and the most Judicious and Pious are puzzled what to make of them, as appears from the various Explication which is given them. Some think that by Iniquity, &c. *Balaam* understands Idols, which the *Hebrews*, often call, Vanity, Iniquity, Falshood and Perverseness. But this Sense can have no Place here, because God had not only seen Idols among the *Israelites*, but had also most severely punished them for having them, *Exod.* xxxii. 9. *Deut.* ix. 13. Others think they signify great and heinous Crimes, which abounded among the Heathens, and were not to be found among the *Israelites*. But neither is this true, for God upbraids them frequently with the greatest Enormities, and their least Faults were so much the more heinous, because they were *the People of God*. In fine, some fancy that 'tis said, he doth not behold their Iniquity and Perverseness, because he had pardoned

them, as if he had never seen them. But these are wide of the Meaning. We must therefore observe with *Gataker*, and several others, that the *Hebrew* Words which are rendered, *beheld* and *seen*, don't only signify a bare Sight of Things (for in this Sense, God sees the greatest Crimes, as well as the best Actions) but also seeing them with Approbation. Thus 'tis said, *That God looketh on the Contrite, and is of purer Eyes than that he can behold Evil, Isa.* lxvi. 2. *Hab.* i. 13. That is, That he approveth the Contrite, but cannot approve Sin. We must likewise observe that the *Hebrew* Particle *Beh*, which we translate *in*, frequently signifies *against*, as *Exodus* xx. 16.—*against thy Neighbour.* And *Numb.* xii. 1.—*against Moles.* So likewise in several other Places. We must yet further remark, that the Words which are translated Iniquity and Perverseness, do often signify an Outrage and Vexation, or Affliction and Trouble. The Text then should be rendered, *He does not approve Afflictions or Outrages against the Posterity of Jacob, nor Vexation or Trouble against the Posterity of Israel.* This is very agreeable to all that *Balaam* said and did on this Occasion, and stops the Mouths of *Libertines* and *Enthusiasts.* R 3 “ *ons*

“ons or Outrages against the Posterity of *Jacob*, nor
 “of Vexation or Trouble against the Posterity of *Israel*.
 “The Lord his God is with him, and the (s) Shout of
 “a King is in him. God hath brought him out of *Egypt*;
 “he hath, as it were, the Strength of an (t) Unicorn.
 “Surely no Inchantment can prevail against *Jacob*, nor
 “any Divination against *Israel*. So that considering
 “what God shall work this Time for the Deliverance
 “of his People, all the World shall wonder and say,
 “What hath God wrought! Who hath put his People
 “out of the Reach of Fraud or Force, and turned the
 “intended Curse into a Blessing. And to shew their fu-
 “ture Strength and Success, the People shall rise up as
 “a great Lion, and lift up themselves as a young Lion.
 “They shall not lie down until they eat of the Prey, and
 “drink of the Blood of the Slain.” This was such a
 Mortification to *Balak*, that he silences *Balaam*, for-
 bidding him either to curse or bless. But his Eagerness
 to have *Israel* cursed, made him change his Mind: For
 he calls for *Balaam*, and intreats him to try another Place,
 in hopes God would permit him to curse *Israel*. Here-
 upon *Balaam* followed *Balak* to the Top of Mount *Peor*,
 a Hill that looked towards the Wilderness. Whatsoever
 Ground *Balak* might have for his Hopes, it's certain *Ba-
 laam* knew the positive Will of God in this Case was to
 bless and not to curse; and this he had declared to be ir-
 reversible, when he told *Balak* God was not like fickle
 Man: Yet stimulated with the blind Desire of Reward,
 he consents to *Balak* to tempt the Lord afresh; for he
 there erected seven Altars, and laid seven Sacrifices thereon.
 But having in vain tried all his Arts of (u) Divination,
 and seeing that God was resolved to continue blessing *Is-
 rael*, without withdrawing, as before (under Pretence
 to consult the Lord) looking on the Camp of *Israel*, the

(s) *Shout*. So *Jerome*, *Arius Montanus*, *Tremellius*, and *Junius* turn it. That is, the Triumph of a King victorious over his Enemies.

(t) *Unicorn*. This Animal (generally supposed to be the *Rhinoceros*) is frequently

used to express extraordinary Strength. As here, *Numb.* xxiii. 22. *Psal.* xxix. 6. *Job* xxxix. 12. *Deut.* xxxiii. 17. *Psa.* xxii. 21. and xcii. 11, &c.

(u) *Divination*. See *Numb.* xxiv. 1.

NUMBERS CHAP. XXIV.⁴²

Balaam blesses Israel.



NUMBERS 24. Verse 3.

*And he took up his parable, and said,
Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and
the man whose eyes are open, hath said,*

(w) Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he cried out in an Extasy, “How good are thy Tents, O *Jacob*, and “thy Tabernacles, O *Israel*!” Then by significant Metaphors he foretold the Extent, Fertility, and Strength of *Israel*, and that those that blessed them should be blessed, and those that cursed them should be cursed.

Balak enrag’d to see that *Balaam*, whom he had called to curse the People of *Israel*, had blessed them three several Times, and (x) smiting his Hands together, upbraided *Balaam* with having deceived him, in blessing those whom he was sent for to curse. Then being no longer able to restrain his Rage, he bid him haste and be gone; “For, I thought (said he) to have promoted thee to “great Honour, if thou hadst answer’d my Design in “cursing *Israel*; but the Lord hath hindered thy Pre- “ferment.” *Balaam* had recourse to his old Excuse, that he could not exceed the Commands of the Lord, but must speak what he put into his Mouth: And tho’ he was willing to gratify the King of *Moab* in some Sort, and perhaps (considering his covetous Temper) to intitle himself to some Reward, he offer’d to (y) advertise them now at parting, what the *Israelites* should do to his People in the latter Days: But still, against his own Inclination, he bestow’d Blessings on *Israel*, and prophesied, a Star should come forth from *Jacob*, and a Rod from *Israel*; that it should smite the Chiefs of *Moab*, and destroy the Children of *Seth*; that *Edom* should fall under its Power; and that the *Amalekites* and *Kenites* should be extirpated. In fine, he foretold, that the Western Nations, the *Greeks* and *Romans*, should vanquish the *Assyrians*, destroy the *Hebrews*, and perish themselves.

After these Predictions, as if vex’d at his own Disappointment in missing the Reward he expected, and to be reveng’d on the *Israelites* as the Occasion of it, he

(w) Spirit. In *Numb.* xxiii. it is observable, that while *Balaam* us’d his Art of Divination or Inchantment, he had only a Word put into his Mouth; but now having laid aside his Inchantments, the Spirit of God came upon him.

(x) Smiting, &c. This was a great Token of Displeasure, as smiting the Breast was of Sorrow.

(y) Advertise. See *Numb.* xxiv. 14. But that this was in Revenge, is plain from the next Note.

(z) instructs the *Moabites* and *Midianites* in a wicked Artifice; which was to send their Daughters to the Camp of the *Israelites*, to draw those People into Idolatry; the sure Method to deprive them of the Assistance of God, who protected them. This Artifice succeeded; for the very next Account we have of the *Israelites* is, that they lay incamp'd at (a) *Shittim*; where many of them were deluded by the *Moabitish* and *Midianitish* Women, and were drawn in, not only to commit Whoredom with them, but to assist at their Sacrifices, and worship their Gods, even (b) *Baal-Peor*.

The Greatness of this Sin appears in the Severity of the Punishment: For God commanded *Moses* to take the Chiefs of those that had joined themselves to *Baal-Peor*, and hang them up before the Lord in the Sight of all the People. *Moses* accordingly gave Charge to the (c) Judges of *Israel* to see Execution done, every one on the Men under his Charge, that sacrificed to *Baal-Peor*. But the divine Justice did not stop here. Their Whoredom must be punished as well as their Idolatry; which was aggravated vastly by a Person of considerable Worth and Dignity. Bold *Zimri*, the Son of *Salu*, Prince of a chief House among the *Simeonites*, took *Cozbi* the Daughter of *Zur*, who was also a Prince of a chief House in *Midian*, and daringly brought her to the *Israelitish* Camp, in Contempt of *Moses*, and in Sight of all the Congregation, who, because of the late Execution done upon their Princes, stood weeping before the Door of the Tabernacle; and leading her openly into his Tent,

(z) *Instructs*. After *Balaam* had given *Balak* what Hints he could concerning the Ruin of his People by the *Israelites*, which was no very comfortable Admonition (for he did not at the same Time instruct him how to avoid that Ruin) by Way of Revenge he puts them in a Way to render the People of *Israel* odious to their God, and taught *Balak* how to betray *Israel*, and draw them into Fornication and Idolatry; which soon after followed. This indeed is not mentioned in *Numb.* xxiv. where this Passage or

Interview between *Balak* and *Balaam* ends; but *Moses* in *Ch.* xxxi. v. 16. doth plainly refer to the Counsel of *Balaam*, and lays the whole Blame on him.

(a) *Shittim*. Which signifies, *Turning aside*.

(b) *Baal-Peor*. Supposed to be the beasty *Priapus*.

(c) *Judges*. I suppose these were those Judges, whom, by the Advice of his Father-in-Law *Jethro*, with God's Approbation, he had set over the People, *Exod.* xviii.

there

there lay with her. This superlative Impudence, and open Violation of God's Law, none offer to resent, but *Phineas*, *Aaron's* Grandson ; who rising up from the Congregation, and filled with a divine Zeal, took a Javelin in his Hand and followed them to the Tent ; where in the very Act of Whoredom he thrust them both through. This zealous Act of *Phineas* put a stop to the Plague, which God had sent among the People for this audacious Act of *Zimri's*, and the other Lewdnesses and Impieties of his Comrades. However, there died on this Occasion no less than (d) four and twenty thousand. *Phineas's* holy Zeal for God's Honour gain'd him not only high Commendation, but a perpetual Settlement of the Priesthood in himself and his Posterity.

These Disorders thus quieted, and the Offenders punished, the next thing was to take Vengeance of the (e) *Midianites*, who had debauched the *Israelites* with their Idolatry and Whoredoms. (f) In order to which, *Moses* commanded a Detachment of twelve thousand select Men, a thousand out of every Tribe, to go against

(d) *Four, &c.* In this Number, it is probable, *Moses* does include the Thousand Princes that were hanged. Which Computation reconciles this Place to that of the Apostle, 1 Cor. x. 8. where he mentions but three and twenty thousand, without the thousand Princes that were hanged.

(e) *Midianites.* Under this Name I take the *Moabites* also to be comprehended.

(f) *In order.* In Num. xxv. 16. God commanded *Moses* to vex the *Midianites* for betraying *Israel*, and to smite them. But the Execution of this Order is interrupted by some Things, which being not strictly Historical, we will here in the Notes give a short Hint of them. After the Plague the Lord commanded that the People, that is, the Males, should again be number'd. In which the same Method was appointed to be taken that was used in the former Numbering, Numb i. For the other Tribes, being numbered with respect to War, and to their possessing the Land, were number'd from twenty Years old : But the *Levites* being exempted from War, and excluded from

Possessions, were numbered from a Month old. The Account of this is set down at large in Numb. xxvi. by which it appears, that of all that were first number'd by *Moses* and *Aaron* in the Wilderness of *Sinai*, Numb. i. there was not then a Man left alive, besides *Moses*, *Joshua*, and *Caleb*. So that in less than forty Years, six hundred and three thousand, five hundred and fifty grown Men (for so many were numbered, Ch. i. besides the Tribe of *Levi*) died in the Wilderness. And yet now at this second Numbering there were found six hundred and one thousand, seven hundred and thirty Men of twenty Years old and upwards, besides *Levites*.

The next thing is an Enumeration of divers Laws and Ordinances ; some of which were more general, as relating to the daily Burnt-Offerings, and other Offerings upon particular Festivals. Some were more particular, as private Vows of Maids, Wives, Widows, and divorced Persons, and the settling of Inheritances in the Female Line. Of which, see from Numb. xxviii. to xxx.

the

the *Midianites*; amongst whom went the zealous *Phineas*, who carried with him the holy Instruments, or Trumpets to animate the People. This was indeed but a small Army to invade so great and powerful a People. But God, who put them upon this Expedition, went along with them, and bless'd them with such wonderful Success, that they slew five Kings, and all their Men; among whom was the wicked Prophet (g) *Balaam*, who tho' he had before escap'd the Angel's Sword, yet now fell a Sacrifice to the injur'd People of God. They burn'd all the Cities and Castles, took all the Women and Children Prisoners, and seiz'd on their Cattle, Flocks, and Goods: After which, loaded with the Spoils of their Enemies, they return in Triumph to the *Israelitish* Camp. In the Way Home they are met by *Moses*, *Eleazer* the High-Priest, and all the Princes; who congratulate their Success. But *Moses*, seeing the *Midianitish* Women among the Captives, was much offended at the Officers of the Army for saving them; for these, said he, by the Counsel of *Balaam*, caused the *Israelites* to sin against the Lord in the Business of *Peor*, and provoked him to send a Plague upon the Congregation of *Israel*. And thereupon he commanded them to kill every Male among the Children, and every Woman that had lain with Man; and to save none alive but the Virgin Females. After which they were to abide seven Days without the Camp, and both Soldiers and Spoils pass through the Ceremonies of a legal Purification: Which when they had perform'd, God directed *Moses* to take an Account of the whole Prey, and dividing it into two equal Parts, to give one to the Soldiers who had taken it, and the other Part among the rest of the People that stay'd at home. Out of the Soldiers Part he levied the Five hundredth Part, both of Persons and Beasts; which he paid as a Tribute to *Eleazer* the Priest, for a Heave-Offering

(g) *Balaam*. By this it seems he was not got home; and it may be, with Reason, conjectur'd, that he was devising much the same Mischief against the *Is-*

breus, whilst he was among the *Midianites*, as when he was among the *Moabites*; and therefore he justly fell by the Sword of *Israel*.

of the Lord; and out of the other Part, which the People had, one Part out of fifty of both Persons and Beasts was given to the *Levites*. Then the Officers of the Army, out of the other Parts of the Booty which they had taken, as Jewels of Gold, Bracelets, Rings, Earrings and Tablets, brought their expiatory Offering to atone for their Transgression in saving the *Midianitish* Women, and their gratulatory Offering of Thanksgiving for so great a Victory. The Greatness of which may be guess'd from the Number of their Prisoners and Cattle; the Virgin Females were two and thirty thousand; all the rest of the People, Men, Women, and Children, were put to the Sword. The Plunder in Cattle and Flocks consisted of Six hundred seventy and five thousand Sheep, seventy and two thousand Beeves, and sixty one thousand Asses; besides rich Goods and Ornaments. And to make this still more great and miraculous, the Victory was gained without the Loss of one Man on *Israel's* Side, as appears from the Report the Officers made upon a (b) Muster.

The *Israelites* thus taking Possession of the Country on this Side *Jordan*, the Tribes of *Reuben* and *Gad*, and the half Tribe of *Manasseh*, observing it to be a fertile Soil, and good Pasturage, desired of *Moses* that they might settle in that Country, upon Condition that they should march with the other Tribes to conquer the Land where they were to settle; that they would not return till the others were in Possession; and that they would claim no Part of the Lands that were beyond *Jordan*. *Moses* at first thought they intended to venture no further, but had a Mind to sit down in a Country ready gained, and leave their Brethren the rest of the Tribes: Upon which he blamed them for offering by such a Proposal to discourage the rest of the *Israelites*. But when he understood their real Design, upon Condition they performed their Promise, he granted their Request.

(b) Muster. See *Numb.* xxxi. 49.

(i) After

(i) After this, *Moses* gives a particular Account of the several Stations and Removes, which the Children of *Israel* made from *Rameses* in *Egypt*, to the River *Jordan* in *Canaan*. Then he describes the Bounds of the promised Land, and gives the Names of the Persons appointed to divide it among the Tribes of *Israel*. And afterwards Order is given, that the Children of *Israel* should assign to the *Levites* eight and forty Cities, with Suburbs to them, in which the *Levites* might live amongst the Tribes, and of which Number, six were appointed to be Cities of Refuge for the Man-slayer to fly to, who had happened to kill a Man by Chance. But Provision was made, that he, who should be duly convicted of wilful Murder, should be put to Death: And in capital Cases, it was provided, that none should be convicted of such Crimes by the Evidence of one single Man. There was a Law likewise made, that every Daughter, who should possess an Inheritance in any Tribe of the Children of *Israel*, should be married to one of the Tribe of her Father, that so the Children of *Israel* might enjoy every one the Inheritance of his Father; and the Inheritance not be transferred to another Tribe. This was grounded upon a Law made (k) before, which empowered Daughters to inherit Lands, where the Heirs Male should be deficient; and was the Case of *Zelophebad's* Daughters, who, upon obtaining this Act, were required to marry within the Family of their (l) Father's Tribe.

By this Time the forty Years Travel of the *Israelites* was near expired. *Moses* therefore considering, that the present Generation of the *Israelites*, now ready to pass over *Jordan* to take Possession of the promised Land, were either sprung up since the Law was gi-

(i) *After*. The Matter of this Paragraph is contained in *Numb. Ch. xxxiii, xxxiv, xxxv*.

(k) *Before*. See *Numb. xxvii. 1, 2, &c.*

(l) *Father's*. Upon this, they are said, *Numb. xxxvi. 11.* to be married to their Father's Brother's Sons. That is, as it

is explain'd in *ver. 12.* They were married into the Families, or some that were of the Families of *Manasseh*, the Son of *Joseph*. Which takes off the Force of their Argument, who from hence would infer the Lawfulness of Marriages between First-Cousins.

ven at Mount *Sinai*, near forty Years before, or too young to remember and understand the Law then given, thought fit to repeat the Law to them.

A little before his Death therefore he assembled the People of *Israel* on the first Day of the eleventh Month, in the fortieth Year from their Departure out of *Egypt* (the People being yet in the Plains of *Moab* by *Jordan*, and near *Jericho*) he repeated to them briefly (*m*) all that had befallen their Fathers since they left *Egypt*: The gracious Dealings of God with them; their Unruliness, Disobedience, and Rebellions, which had so often provoked the Lord to punish them, and brought not only upon them, but by their Means upon him also, that grievous Sentence, That they should not enter into the good Land. Which Account he often repeats, that these might take Warning by the Miscarriages of their Forefathers. Then he repeated the (*n*) Decalogue, and divers other Laws and Precepts formerly given, tho' not without some Variations, with the Addition of some new Laws on divers Subjects, and Explanations of the Old, exhorting them to a strict Observation of them, promising they should soon enter the Land of *Canaan*, and commanded them to destroy all the Idols of the Inhabitants of the Country, and to extirpate the People. He encouraged them to be faithful to God, assuring them, if they kept his Commandments they should have Blessings heaped upon them; and threatening them with all manner of Calamities, if they departed from them. He renewed the Covenant with the People in the Name of the Lord; commanded them with a loud Voice to proclaim on the Mountains of *Gerizim* and *Hebal*, beyond *Jordan*, Blessings to all those who kept the Covenant, and Curses to all those who broke it, and to erect an Altar in the Land of *Canaan*, on which they should write the Terms and Conditions of their Covenant with God. These Things, with Rehearsals sometimes of their Fa-

(*m*) *Al.* See from *Deut.* i. to iv.

(*n*) *Decalogue.* *Ibid.* Ch. v.

thers and their own (o) Prevarications, *Moses* not only delivered to the People by Word of Mouth, but wrote them in a Book; which he gave into the Custody and Care of the *Levites*, with Direction from the Lord, that they should put it into the side of the Ark, to be kept there for a Witness against *Israel*, if they should rebel. Besides this, *Moses* by the immediate Direction of God composed a (p) Song, in which are at large described, by the many Benefits and Favours of God to his People, their Ingratitude to, and Forgetfulness of him; the Punishments by which he corrected them, with Threatnings of greater Judgments if they persisted to provoke him by a Repetition of their Follies. This Song *Moses* recited to the People, and gave Order that they should learn it, and repeat it often; that when for their transgressing the Law, many Calamities and Troubles should befall them, this Song might be a Witness for God against them.

The Time was just now approaching, and the People ready to pass over *Jordan*; but the Lord having before told *Moses*, that he should not conduct the People into the promised Land, because of his Error at the Waters of *Meribah*, he bid him now get him up into the Mountain *Abarim* unto the Mount *Nebo* in the Land of *Moab*, over-against *Jericho*, and take a View of the Land of *Canaan*, and then die there in that Mount, as his Brother *Aaron* had died in Mount *Hor*.

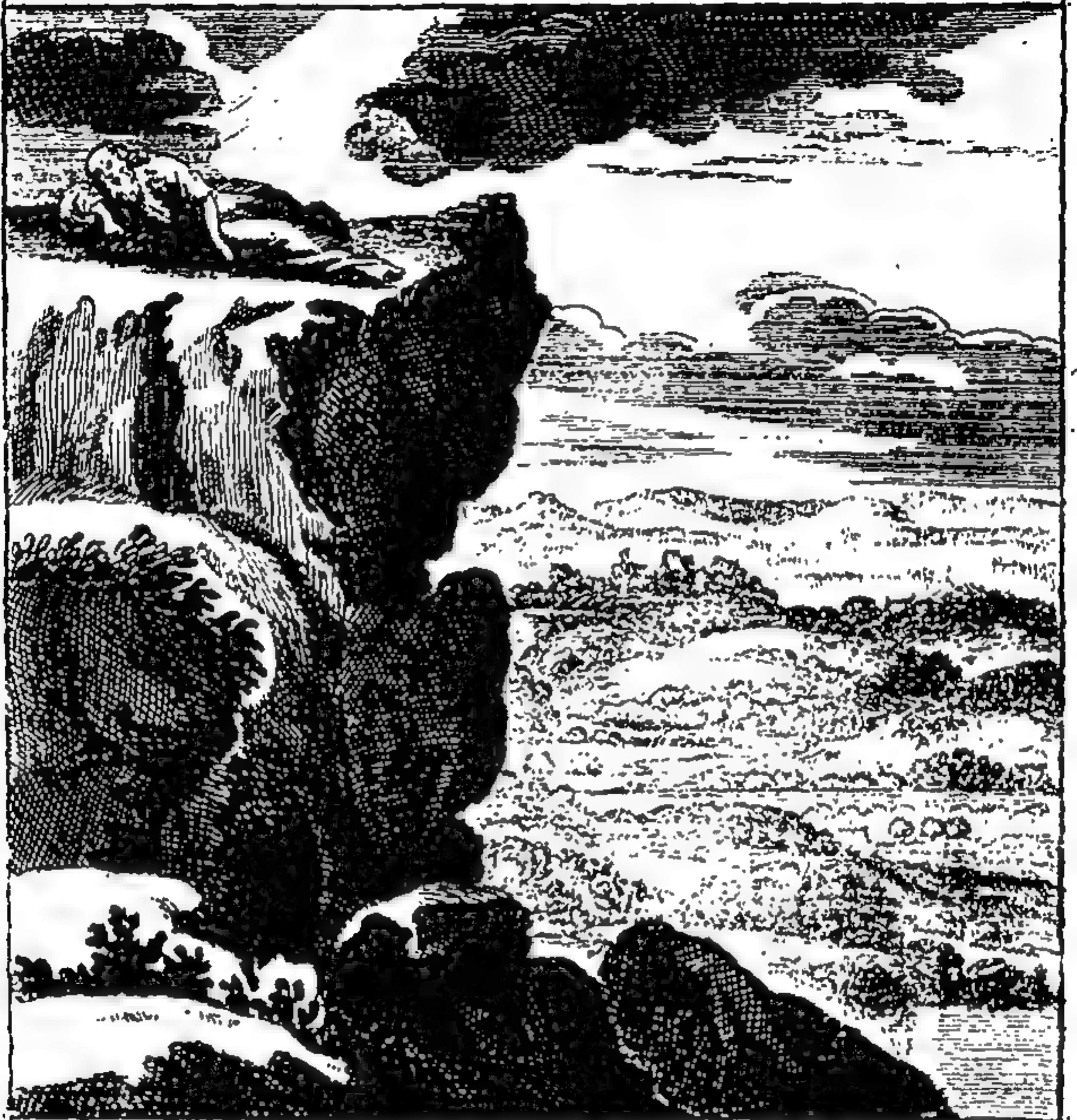
Moses had before endeavoured to deprecate one Part of his Sentence, his not being permitted to enter into the promised Land, but in vain; he therefore humbly submits to the Almighty's Pleasure now, and takes a solemn Farewel of the People in a Prophetick Blessing, which he pronounced upon each Tribe, as *Jacob* had done just before his Death. And having before, by God's Command, appointed *Joshua* to be his Successor, to conduct the People to the promised Land, laying his Hands upon

(o) *Prevarications*. *Ibid*, See from *Cb.* iv, to *Cb.* xxxi.

(p) *Song*. *Ibid*. *Cb.* xxxii.

⁴³
DEUTERONOMY CHAP. XXXIV.

Moses dies on mount Nebo.



DEUTERONOMY 34. Verse 5.

*So Moses the Servant of the LORD died
there in the land of Moab, according
to the word of the LORD.*

him in such solemn and publick Manner, as gave all the People to understand, that after *Moses's* Death *Joshua* was to be their Leader, *Moses* went up to the Top of *Pisgab* over-against *Jericho*, from whence, as the Lord had promised him, he could take a full View of the Countries round about.

Tho' his End was just approaching, and he an hundred and twenty Years old, yet he was in such good Health and full Strength, that neither was his Eye dim, nor his natural Force abated; therefore whilst these lasted, he with Pleasure surveys the beauteous Prospect. He views the delightful Town and Plains of *Jericho*; sees *Lebanon's* fair Cliffs and lofty Cedars, and then resigns his Soul into the Hands of *Seraphs*, who waited to convey him to a happier *Canaan* than what he had just before surveyed.

The Lord, who knew the wanton Inclination of the *Israelites* to Idolatry, lest they, when they remembered the wonderful Things *Moses* had performed for them, should pay any superstitious Adoration to his Remains after Death, paid the funeral Honours to this great Prophet himself, and in a Valley in the Land of *Moab*, over-against *Beth-Peor*, buried him so secretly, that no Man ever knew where his Sepulchre was. And though he had no publick Monument or Tombstone erected, yet this stands as an honourable Epitaph on him recorded in holy Scripture, *Deut. xxxiv. 10, 11, 12.*

*What Prophet by the sacred Breath inspir'd,
What Friend of God with holy Raptures fir'd,
Whose deathless Name can equal Glories share,
Or with God's Servant Moses can compare?
With mortal Eyes th' Invisible he saw,
On trembling Sinai's Top receiv'd the Law:
From Egypt's Fetters ransom'd Israel brought,
And in their Sight great Signs and mighty Wonders wrought.*

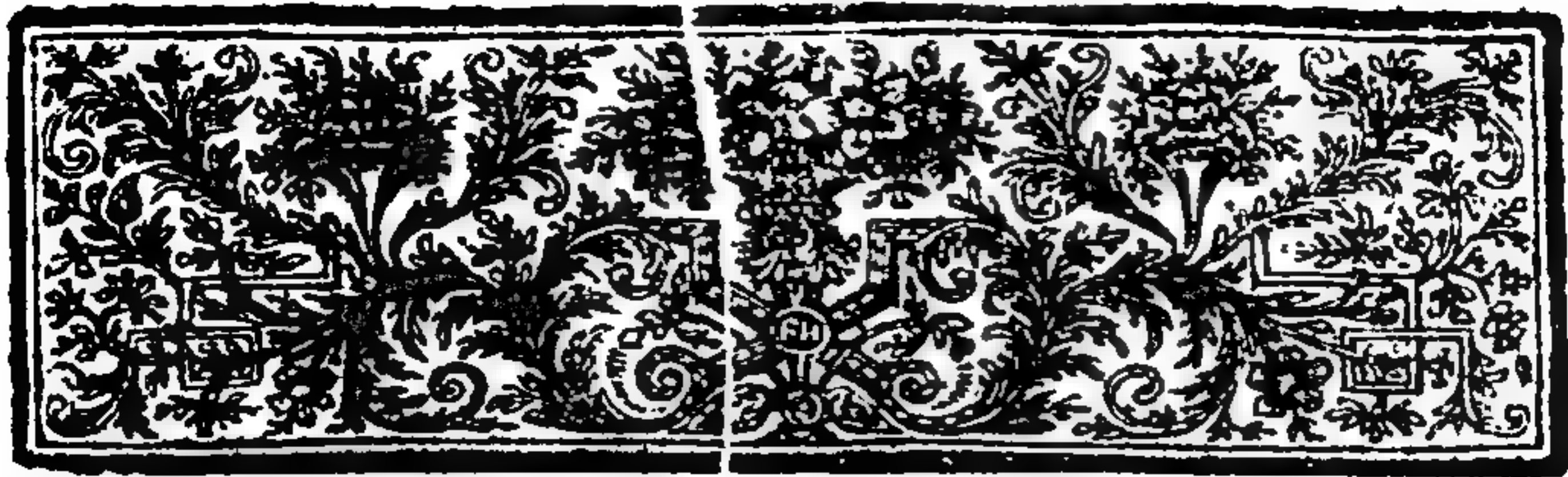
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Thus died that illustrious Prophet * *Moses*; whose Death, when the Children of *Israel* understood, they lamented with great Solemnity, weeping and mourning for him in the Plains of *Moab* thirty Days.

* *Moses*. Thus far the sacred History was of *Moses's* Inditing, which contains the five first Books of the Bible, and is thence called the *Pentateuch*. All Antiquity, both sacred and profane, acknowledge *Moses* to have been the Legislator of the *Jews*; and that whole Nation has always carefully preserved his Books as containing their Law. When the Tribes were divided into two Kingdoms, both of them preserved the same Respect for those Books, as being writ by him. The *Samaritans*, who came afterwards, received them from the *Israelite* Priests; the *Jews* carried them to *Babylon*, when they were led Captives thither; they brought them back, and afterwards revised and corrected them. Profane Authors have spoke of them, as written by *Moses*. In short, it is as certain, that the Books which go by the Name of *Moses* are his own, as that those which are ascribed to *Herodotus*, *Thucydides*, &c. appertain to those, whose Names they bear. It is possible there may have been some Additions and Alterations made in them; but the Bulk of the History and the Laws could not be altered. As to the Truth of the History, we have several Proofs. 1. It is the most ancient History in the World; for whether *Moses* was contemporary with *Inachus* the first King of *Argos*, who lived six hundred Years before the War of *Troy*; or whether he did not live till

the Time of *Cecrops*, King of *Athens*, who reigned three hundred Years before that War, it is certain he is much antienter than *Homer* or *Hesiod*, or any profane Writer. 2. *Moses* is the only Person that has given a plain and historical Account of the Origin of the World, and who has continued that History uniform, and without any Interruption to his own Time. All that others have written of the first Ages is, as they own themselves, mere Ignorance, Darkness, and Fable. 3. *Moses* wrote at a Time when he could be sure of the Truth of what he wrote, and when it might have been easy to have convicted him of Falshood, had he delivered any Fables. 4. We have nothing in ancient History, nor in Fable, to prove that the World is older than *Moses* represents it. 5. His History agrees with the profane Historians of several Nations. We there find the Originals of several Nations, and their ancient Names, which many of them have preserved. But if Religion did not convince us, that the Books of *Moses* were written by divine Inspiration, yet Reason ought to persuade us, that this History of *Moses* is true, and the only one wherein we can find when the World began, and how long it has lasted. As for the last Chapter of *Deuteronomy*, it was written by *Joshua*, as a Preparation to his History, and could not be supposed to be written by *Moses*, as giving an Account of his Death.

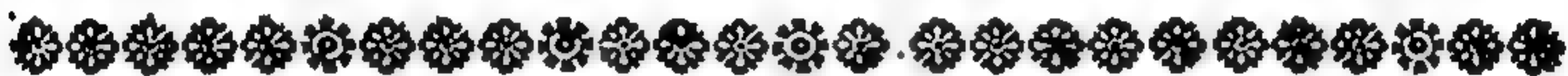




A COMPLEAT
 HISTORY
 OF THE
 HOLY BIBLE.



BOOK III.



UPON the Death of *Moses*, *Joshua*, by the Command of God, undertakes the Charge of the Children of *Israel*. He had been Prime Minister to *Moses* for the greatest Part of those forty Years the *Israelites* wandered in the Wilderness ; had seen the wonderful Works God wrought by *Moses* ; understood well the Nature and Disposition of the People ; was one of the twelve Spies which were sent to search the promised Land, and one of the two that gave a just Report of it, in Opposition to the other ten Spies that gave an evil and false Account of it. For these and other Qualifications, he was formally installed into his Office with very solemn Ceremonies ; *Moses* having, by God's Command, pre-

presented him before *Eleazar* the Priest, laid his Hand upon him, and disposed to him (q) some of the Honour that was upon himself, in the Sight of the whole Congregation.

Being now ready to enter and take Possession of the promised Land, God, for *Joshua's* greater Encouragement, strengthen'd his former Commission, by giving him a more immediate and express Command, as he had before done to his Servant (r) *Moses*, to lead the People over *Jordan*; telling him, that every Place, upon which the Sole of their Feet should tread, should be their own; and assuring him, that there should not any Man be able to stand before him all the Days of his Life: For as he had been with *Moses*, so he would be with him, and never fail, nor forsake him: Therefore he bid him be strong and of good Courage, for he should divide the Land for an Inheritance to the People. And to engage him to a Performance of the Law, which he had delivered to *Moses*, he annexes a continual Series of Prosperity and Success; charging him to make it his Study Day and Night, as the Standard of all his future Actions, and repeating his former Assurance of his Presence with him wheresoever he went.

Joshua, upon this Encouragement, prepares to put the Command of the Lord in Execution; and, that nothing material might be omitted, he orders the Officers to go thro' the Camp and give Notice to the People, that within three Days they should pass the *Jordan*, in order to possess the Land which the Lord their God had given them, and that they should provide themselves with Victuals for such a March.

The City of *Jericho* was just opposite to the Place

(q) *Some*, &c. See *Numb.* xxvii. 20.

(r) *Moses*. God spake now to *Joshua* by his Angel, as he had done to *Moses*, when he gave him the Law upon Mount *Sinai*, as appears from *Gal.* iii. 19. For Angels are the ministring Spirits of God, *Heb.* i. 14. For which Reason, as often as it is said in the Old Testament, that God appeared or spoke to any one, it

must be understood, that he did it not by himself, but by his Angel.

Besides, the Angel here speaking to *Joshua*, may be said to speak either by spiritual Locution, injecting to his Mind the Notions of these Words, so as if *Joshua* had heard God speaking to him; or by corporal Locution, assuming an apparent Body: Either of which is probable, where

where they were to pass. *Joshua* therefore (*s*) before his Order for their making Provision for this March, sent two Spies thither to observe the Situation and Strength of the Place, and the Avenues to it; because it would be the first Place they were to attack, after they had pass'd the River. These (*t*) Spies entering *Jericho*, went to a publick House of Entertainment, which was kept by (*u*) *Rabab*, and there took up their Lodging. But being observed by some to go in there, Information is presently given to the King of *Jericho*, that two *Israelites* were come to search the Country. Upon this the King sent to *Rabab* to produce them; but she having timely Notice, had hid them upon the (*w*) Roof of the House, under the Stalks of the Flax which she had spread there. Having thus secured the Men, she put off the King's Messengers with a feigned Story, pretending that some Men did come to her House, but she knew not what they were, nor whence they came; and that when it grew dark, before the Gates were shut, they went out, but she knew not whither; and to prevent any farther Suspicion, she advised to pursue them quickly, for they could not be far off. Upon this they sent out several to take them, who went as far as the Fords of *Jordan*, but in vain.

(*s*) *Before*. This Direction for Marching is mentioned in the Text, before the sending the Spies to *Jericho*. See *Josh. i. 11.* and *Cb. ii. 1.* But it seems the Spies were sent before that, and returned to the Camp at *Shittim*, before they took their March towards *Jordan*: For the Spies spent longer Time in their Search, than was between the Notice given for Marching, and the March, which was but three Days: Whereas they lay hid three Days in the Mountains for their Safety, besides the Time they spent in *Jericho*, and in going and returning; which they could not have done, had they been sent away before the Order for Marching was given. So that what is delivered in the second Chapter of *Deuteronomy*, should in order of Time come in about the Middle of the first Chapter, between the Ninth and Tenth Verses, being, as *Junius* and *Tremellius* observe, displaced by a Figure called *Hyperbaton*.

(*t*) *Spies*. These Spies are fabulously

supposed by the *Rabbins* to be *Phineas* and *Caleb*; which is very improbable. For *Phineas* was designed by God to be a Priest, and *Caleb* a Man in great Authority. But *Josh. vi. 23.* positively says they were young Men.

(*u*) *Rabab*. Interpreters are at great Variance about the Quality of this Woman; most agreeing, she was an Hostess, which is very probable; and that she is rendered an Harlot upon the Account of Idolatry; for it is a common Phrase in Scripture to say, --- *Go a whoring after other Gods*. That she was a Victualler is unquestionable.

(*w*) *Roof*. The Roofs of Houses were then built flat, so that they could walk upon them, and set their Goods there, having Battlements round them to secure them from falling off. *Deut. xxii. 8.* And such a Roof it was that *David* afterwards walked upon, when he unhappily espied the fair *Bathsheba* bathing herself, 2 *Sam. xi. 2.*

When they were gone, *Rahab* went up to the Men she had hid, and thus accosts them: “ I know the Lord
 “ hath given you this Land, and the Fame of you is be-
 “ come so terrible to us, that our People are utterly dis-
 “ couraged. For we have heard, how the Lord dried up
 “ the Water of the *Red Sea* for you to pass over, when
 “ ye came out of *Egypt*; and how ye subdued *Sihon*
 “ and *Og*, the two *Amorite* Kings, on the other side of
 “ *Jordan*. These Actions have flash’d Terror amongst
 “ our People, and quite dispirited them. Your God is
 “ the only God in Heaven and Earth. Now therefore,
 “ in regard of the Service I have done in concealing you,
 “ shew Favour to me and my Family, when you come
 “ into Power, and save us alive; and of this ye shall
 “ give me some Assurance.” They readily promise up-
 on their Lives to secure her and all that belong’d to her;
 upon which she let them down by a Cord from the
 Window, which fac’d the Country, for her House
 stood on the Town Wall. When they were down, she
 advis’d them to make to the Mountains to avoid the
 Pursuers, and to conceal themselves three Days, till the
 Search was over. The Spies, seeing the Sincerity of the
 Woman in consulting their Security, resolve to make
 her easy in their Promise to her; and for a Token of
 their Integrity in the Performance of it, give her this
 farther Assurance. When she should see the *Israelitish*
 Army approach the Town, they bid her be sure to tie a
 (x) scarlet Twine in the Window, thro’ which she let
 them down; and to bring her Father and Mother, Bre-
 thren, and all her Family home to her, and be careful to
 keep them within Doors, that when their Forces should
 enter the Town, by this Token they might distinguish
 the House and spare them. And that if any should strag-
 gle from the House, their Blood should be upon their
 own Heads; but if any one in the House should come

(x) *Scarlet*. This being a Token of Deliverance to *Rahab* and her Family, is not unaptly reckoned a Type of the Blood of Christ, by which we are deli-

vered from the Death of Soul and Body. This is the Opinion of several Fathers, particularly St. *Ambrose* and St. *Augustine*.

JOSHUA CHAP. II.

44

The spies let down by a cord.



JOSHUA 2. Verse 15.

Then she let them down by a cord thro' the window, for her house was upon a town wall, and she dwelt upon the wall. 260.

to any Damage, they would answer for it. To these Terms she gladly agreed, and so dismissed them.

The Spies, having hitherto thus happily succeeded, take *Rahab's* Advice, and make the best of their Way to the Mountains, where they lay hid three Days ; in which Time, those that went in Pursuit of them, despairing to find them, returned to *Jericho* ; and the Spies descending from the Mountains, ford over *Jordan*, arrive safe in the *Israelitish* Camp, and give *Joshua* their General a faithful Account of their Expedition ; adding, that for certain the Lord had delivered the Country into their Hands, for the People were quite dispirited at the Fame of them.

Joshua, rous'd at this News, decamps from *Shittim*, and draws down to the *Jordan* : Then putting the Tribes of *Reuben* and *Gad*, and the half Tribe of *Manasseh*, in Mind of the Agreement made between *Moses* and them, that they, leaving their Families and Cattle on this Side *Jordan*, should, with their best Forces, go over arm'd before their Brethren, to help subdue their Enemies, and place them in their Possessions, they acknowledge the Agreement, and declare their Readiness to go ; promising in all Things to be subject to him their General, as they had been to *Moses*, and in all Things to obey his Commands, under Penalty of Death.

The Army being provided of Necessaries for their March, the Officers going thro' the Host commanded the People, that when they should see the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord their God, and the Priests the *Levites* bearing it, then they should move and follow it, that they might know the Way by which they were to go, because they had never before passed that Way. And that a Decency might be observ'd in their March, Direction was given, that they should leave a Space of about (y) 2000 Cubits between the Ark and them.

S 3

Things

(y) *Two thousand.* There were two thousand Cubits between the Ark and the Camp when they marched, *Josh. iii.*

4. and in all Probability, the same Proportion was observed when they rested : This Distance of Ground some interpret to

Things being thus disposed, *Joshua* early in the Morning on the ninth Day of the first Month exhorted the People to sanctify themselves, because the Lord would next Day do Wonders amongst them; and giving Order for the Priests to move, they took up the Ark, and march'd with it before the People to the Banks of the *Jordan*, where they halted: Here the Lord told *Joshua*, that he would so distinguish him in the Sight of all *Israel*, that they should know his Presence should be with him, as it had been with *Moses*. He directed him to bid the Priests, who were to carry the Ark, stop upon the Brink of the River; which they did; and *Joshua* thereupon calling the People together to hear the Words of the Lord their God, told them, That they should hereby know, that the living God was amongst them, and would drive out the Nations before them: For the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord of all the Earth passing into the River *Jordan* before them, as soon as the Feet of the Priests that bare it should touch the Waters, they should divide and stand on a Heap. Accordingly, the Priests march into the River with the Ark, and stopping in the Midst of it, they stood on firm Ground, the rapid Stream dividing; and the Waters forgetting their Fluidity, condense in Heaps to afford them a dry Passage. Thus did God make good his Word to *Joshua*, in promising to magnify him in the Sight of the People, by dividing the Waters of the *Jordan*, as he had done before to *Moses*, when the *Israelites* passed the *Red-Sea*.

But before the People crossed the River, the Lord commanded *Joshua* to select twelve Men, one out of each Tribe, who, as soon as the People had passed the River, were to take up twelve Stones from the Place where the Priests stood on dry Ground, according to the Number of the twelve Tribes, and to set them

to be one Mile, some two; some measuring it according to a less; others according to a longer Cubit, which they term a Geometrical Cubit. But all agree in this, that these two thousand Cubits were

a Sabbath-Day's Journey; because on the Sabbath Day they were all to repair to the Place of God's publick Worship, which was two thousand Cubits distant from those who incamped nearest.

up,

up, as a Memorial of this great Miracle, in that Place. He commanded them likewise to take other twelve Stones, and to carry them on Shore, for another Memorial of the same Miracle.

The Priests that carried the Ark walked on dry Ground to the Midst of *Jordan*, and stopping there, as *Joshua* had ordered them, he commanded the rest of the People to follow, forty thousand of the Tribes of *Reuben* and *Gad*, and the half Tribe of *Manasseh*, well armed, leading the Van. When they were all safely arriv'd on the other Side of the River, the General commanded the Priests that bare the Ark, which stood in the Midst of the *Jordan* till all the People had passed over, to come out of the River with it; which they had no sooner done, but the Waters returned to their natural Channel, and overflowed the Banks, as they usually did.

The *Israelites* having thus securely pass'd the *Jordan*, on the tenth Day of the first Month, incamped in a Place called afterwards *Gilgal*, which was in the East-*Border* of *Jericho*. Here *Joshua* erected the twelve Stones, which the twelve Men had brought out of *Jordan*, as a Monument to Posterity, that when the Descendants of the *Israelites* in future Times should ask the Reason of it, they might know, that the Lord their God had dried up the Waters of the *Jordan*, and caused his People *Israel* to pass that River on dry Land, as he had formerly dried up the *Red-Sea* for their Passage out of *Egypt*; and that all the People of the Earth might be sensible of the Omnipotency of the mighty God of *Israel*.

The Fame of this Miracle soon spread thro' the neighbouring Countries, and struck the Inhabitants with Astonishment and Terror; for when the Kings of the *Amorites*, which were on the West of the *Jordan*, and the Kings of the *Canaanites*, which inhabited by the Sea, heard that the Lord had miraculously convey'd his People over the River by dividing the Waters, their Hearts sunk for Fear, and their Courage failed them.

Joshua having thus conducted the *Israelites* over the

River, God commanded him to cause them all to be (z) circumcis'd : Which being done, the Lord said to *Joshua*, " This Day I have taken away the (a) Shame of " *Egypt* from you." And from this Act of Circumcision, the Place where it was done was then called (b) *Gilgal*. Here the *Israelites* tarried till their Circumcision-wounds were healed ; and here it was they kept the (c) *Passover*, on the fourteenth Day of the first Month, in the Evening. Now did the *Israelites* begin to enjoy the Good of the Land ; the delicious Products of the promised Inheritance : For on the next Day after the *Passover* they eat of the Corn, and there being Plenty of all Fruits, on the Morrow the Manna was withdrawn.

All Things being ready for approaching the City of

(z) *Circumcised*. The great Goodness, as well as Wisdom of God, was very conspicuous in this Act of Circumcision, after the *Israelites* were safe on the other Side of *Jordan*, for their miraculous Passage thro' that River ; and the Fame of former Miracles, wrought by God in their Favour, had affected the neighbouring Nations with such Fear, that they dare not offer the least Opposition to *Israel* in their Passage. But now that they were safe on the other Side of the River, God had a Work to do upon his People, which would render them for a while not only unable to assault their Enemies, but even to defend themselves : For during their Travel in the Wilderness, Circumcision had been omitted ; not, I am apt to think, thro' a Neglect of that Ordinance ; but being, or at least expecting to be, always upon the March, they thought it unsafe to expose them to the Hardship of it ; and all they who were Men when they came out of *Egypt*, and had been circumcised there, being dead (*Joshua* and *Caleb* only excepted) most of the present Generation being such as had been born within the forty Years of their Travel in the Wilderness, had not been circumcised hitherto. Therefore now that they were passed over *Jordan*, and were ready to take Possession of the promised Land, and the Inhabitants of it under a general Consternation having shut themselves up in *Jericho*, the Lord commanded *Joshua* to prepare for the Circumcision of the People.

(a) *Shame*. This Shame might be ei-

ther the reproachful Diffidence of the *Egyptians*, who would not believe that the Lord would make good his Promise in bringing his People into the promised Land (which *Moses* often hinted, when he addressed himself to God in Behalf of the People, to deprecate God's Anger from them, urging, that their Enemies from thence would take Occasion to ridicule and question his Omnipotence) or their Foreskins not being cut off, which rendered them like *Egyptians*.

(b) *Gilgal*. Or *Galgol*, which signifies removing, rolling, or taking away. This Word is used before, in *Josb.* iv. 19. and in *Deut.* xi. 30. but it was in either Place only by Way of Anticipation. This Place is by *St. Jerom* called *Golgal*, a famous City formerly about fifty Furlongs from *Jordan*, and ten from *Jericho* in the strait Road thither. The same *St. Jerom*, with *Bed.* and *Lyr.* render the Word *Galgol*, a *Wheel*, *Revolution*, or *Circumvolution*. From whence they form the Word *Gulgolet*, *Chald.* *Gulgolta*, and thence, *Golgotha*, or *Calvary*, which signifies a Skull, so call'd from its rolling, as being round. And *Calvary*, so call'd from the Skulls of the Criminals there executed.

(c) *Passover*. This was the third *Passover* the *Israelites* celebrated. The first, the Day before they came out of *Egypt*, *Exod.* xii. The second, was the Year after, upon their receiving the Law, and setting up the Tabernacle in *Sinai*, *Numb.* ix. 2. The third, was this here in the Holy Land, in the Plains of *Jericho*, *Josb.* v. 10.

Jericho,

JOSHUA CHAP. V.

An angel appears to Joshua.

45



JOSHUA 5. Verse 13.

And he looked, and behold, there stood a man over against him, with his sword drawn in his hand, &c.

265.

Jericho, *Joshua* gives the Word, and the Army marches towards it. The Place was strong, well provided, and full of Inhabitants, who had retired into it, and seem'd resolved to make a brave Defence. *Joshua* therefore undertakes to view the Place by himself, to find out the most advantageous Approaches to it. Whilst he was making his Observation, there appeared, as he thought, the awful Form of a Man, but with a Lustre in his Face, that bespoke him more than Mortal. In his Hand he held a flaming Sword, and his whole Appearance far surpassed any Thing of human Nature. The *Israelitish* General advances to this (d) great Unknown with a Courage becoming his Character, and boldly demands, who he is for? He answers, For *Israel*, of whose Army and People he was the Guardian. At these Words the General falls (e) prostrate, and waits the Command of his Lord, who bids him loose his Sandals, and not profane the Holy Place with irreverent Approaches. *Joshua* obeys, and receives new Orders for the better Management of the Siege of *Jericho*: He was to cause all the Forces to march round the Place six Days successively, and that the seventh Day the Priests should take the seven Trumpets made of Rams-horns, which were used to declare the (f) Jubilee Year; that they should go before the Ark, and

(d) *Great, &c.* This was an Angel in the Shape of a Man, which the *Hebrew* calls *Gebir*, from whence some think this to be *Gabriel*. See Note one. His appearing in the Shape or Habit of a military Person is very proper in this Place, tho' God always adapts the Appearance of his Messengers to the Occasion. Thus in this Place of *Josh. v. 13.* the drawn Sword in the Hand of a Man of War representing his Power. Thus Christ appeared to *Mary Magdalen* in the Garden, in the Shape of a Gardener. To the two Disciples walking to *Emmaus* he appeared in the Habit of a Traveller, &c.

(e) *Prostrate.* By this Act of Adoration, the Title of Lord, performed and given by *Joshua*, and accepted by the other, it is evident, that this Guardian or Captain of the Lord's Host was Christ, the Son of God, who was pleased in this manner to

appear to *Joshua*, both to encourage and direct him. Wherefore having first bid *Joshua* (as *Moses* was bid at the Burning Bush, *Exod. iii. 5.*) to put off his Shoes, because the Place whereon he stood was holy, (which confirms that it was Christ, whose Presence consecrates every Place, where he appears) and *Joshua* having obeyed, *Ch. v. 13, 14, 15.* the Lord said, *Ch. vi. 2.* See, I have given into thine Hand *Jericho*, and the King thereof, with the mighty Men of Valour; and instructed him in what manner he should beleaguer the City, and shew how he should take it, *Ch. vi. 2, &c.*

(f) *Jubilee.* This Word is derived from the *Hebrew* Word *Jobel*, which signifies a Ram, and also a Ram's Horn, as here in *Josh. vi. 4.* where the Word *Jobelim* is used and expounded by the *Chaldee* Paraphrast, *Rams-Horn,*

round

round the City, and when the Trumpets sounded first loud, and then low, the People should all give a Shout, for then the Walls of the City should fall, and every Man should march in at the Place which was directly before him. Having rounded the City six Days as they were commanded, on the seventh by Break of Day they compassed it seven Times, and at the seventh Time, when the Priests blew with the Trumpets, the General said to the People, "Shout! For the Lord hath given you the City." With that the People give a Shout, and thereupon the Wall of the City fell down flat; so that the Army march'd directly up to it, and took it, putting all to the Sword, both Man and Beast, Old and Young: Only *Rahab*, and those in her House were saved alive; for *Joshua* had given a strict Charge before-hand to the two Spies (which she had formerly concealed) to take Care, when the Town should be taken, to go to her House, and bring out her Family, in Discharge of their Oath to her. Which they accordingly did, and left her with all her Kindred and Substance safe (g) without the Camp of *Israel*. Then setting Fire to the City they destroyed every Thing in it, except the Silver and Gold, and Vessels of Brass and Iron, which were put into the Treasury of the House of the Lord, as it had been commanded. And lest any one should attempt to rebuild this City, *Joshua* publish'd this prophetick Imprecation on the bold Undertaker; "That he should lay the Foundation thereof in his First-born, and set up the Gates thereof in his youngest Son:" By which he meant, that it should be the (b) Ruin of his Family.

Before the City was taken, *Joshua* had cautioned the People not to spare any Thing that was in it, but to destroy all that lay in their Way, except Silver, Gold, Brass, and Iron; which were to be consecrated to the Lord. And therefore he warn'd them not to meddle with any

(g) *Without, &c.* Being *Aliens*, or *Heathens*, they were not permitted to come within the Camp, till they were proselyted, or at least legally purified.

(b) *Ruin*. This was exactly fulfilled in *Hiel the Bethelite*; who in the Days of

Ahab King of *Israel* (above five hundred Years after) began to rebuild *Jericho* with the Loss of his eldest Son *Abiram*, and finish'd it with the Loss of *Segub* his youngest Son, 1 *Kings* xvi. 34.

Thing, for fear of bringing a Curse, not only upon themselves, but upon all the Nation of the *Israelites*. Notwithstanding the strict Charge of *Joshua* against meddling with any Thing that was devoted to this general Destruction, or consecrated to the Lord, yet so prevailing is the sacrilegious Thirst of Gold, that one of the Tribe of *Judah*, whose Name was *Achan*, contrary to the Command of the General, took something of the Spoil of either Sort, and hid them. This prov'd of ill Consequence to *Israel* in general, which was discovered upon this Occasion. *Joshua* being desirous to take in a little City named *Ai*, near *Bethaven*, to the East of *Bethel*, and knowing that it was neither populous nor well defended, detach'd a Body of three thousand Men only to go and attack it: Who no sooner approach the Town, but the Inhabitants sally out and repulse them, and drive them to their Camp; whither those that escaped went so frightened, that they brought a Terror upon the whole Army. This Defeat so afflicted *Joshua*, that rending his Cloaths, and prostrating himself before the Ark of the Lord, he lay there till the Evening, both he and the Elders, in token of extream (i) Sorrow and Humiliation sprinkling Dust on their reverent Heads. But *Joshua* being wholly ignorant of the Offence, and desirous to know the Cause, that had provoked God thus to desert his People, in this humble Expostulation, complains to him, "Wherefore, O Lord God, hast thou brought this
 " People over *Jordan* to deliver them into the Hands
 " of the *Amorites* to destroy them? We had been happy,
 " hadst thou permitted us to have dwelt on the other
 " side of *Jordan*. What shall I say, when *Israel*
 " turn their Backs upon their Enemies? For when the
 " *Canaanites*, and all the Inhabitants of this Land shall
 " hear this, they will encompass us, and cut us off;
 " and what will become of thy Honour?

The Lord not willing to let his Servant *Joshua* languish under the melancholy Thought of being deserted by

(i) Sorrow. See 1 Sam. iv. 11. Nehem. ix. 1.

him, tells him there is a latent Cause of his Displeasure among the People: That some of them had taken of the ^{*}accursed thing, and also of those things which were devoted to the Lord, and pretending as if they had brought it all into the Treasury of God, had concealed it for their own Use. And to put him in a Way to clear the Camp of this accursed thing, which had brought this Judgment upon them, the Lord commanded *Joshua* to proclaim among the People; “There is an accursed thing in the
 “midst of thee, O *Israel*: Ye cannot stand before your
 “Enemies, until ye have removed the accursed thing
 “from among you.” Then directing *Joshua*, how he should find out the Offender; and when he was found and convicted, how he should be punished, early next Morning summon’d all the Tribes before the Lord; and the Lot being cast upon the Tribes, the Tribe of *Judab* was the Tribe to whom the guilty Person belonged. Then proceeding by Lot from Tribe to Family, from Family to Household, and thence to particular Persons, the Lot fell at last upon *Achan*. Having thus happily discover’d the Person, *Joshua*, like a prudent Judge, with great Mildness examines the Criminal, and brought him to a Confession. “I have sinned against the Lord God
 “of *Israel*, said he, for when I saw among the Spoil a (1) Royal Garment, and two hundred Shekels of Silver, with

^{*} *Accursed*. That is, of that which was devoted to Destruction. Our old Translation renders it in *Joshua* vi. 17, 18. *execrable Thing*; and in *Cb.* vii. 11, 12. *excommunicate Thing*; which are synonymous Terms, and signify the same Thing. In which Places the Distinction of the Spoil is plainly expressed. All the Inhabitants of *Jericho*, except *Rahab* and her Family, with their Effects of all Sorts were to be destroyed; only Gold, Silver, Brass and Iron, were to be consecrated to the Lord. These are by the *Septuagint* call’d holy, because they were to be laid up in the Treasury for the Service of the Tabernacle; but all the rest was profane, and ordered to be destroyed. The *Septuagint* keep to the Word *Anathema* in the foresaid Text, which signifies separated or accursed, and implies that the

profane Spoil was not to be mix’d with what was holy. In the same Sense is the Word *Anathema* used in the New Testament, particularly by *St. Paul*, who pronounces Offenders *Anathema*, separated from God, that is, accursed: Which is the old Word for Excommunication, upon the Breach of several Canons in the most early Ages of the Church.

In this one Instance ’tis observable, That tho’ it was but one Man that was actually guilty; yet the Guilt was charged upon the whole People, and they felt the Effects thereof; till they had convicted and punished the Offender. How great then is the Guilt of Nations in general, where Sins are Epidemical, and repeated from Age to Age?

(1) *Royal*. This is render’d *Babylonish*, supposed to be such a rich Garment as

“ with a (*m*) Wedge of Gold, of fifty Shekels Weight,
 “ my Covetousness prompted me to take them; which
 “ I did, and hid them in the Earth in the Midst of my
 “ Tent.” *Joshua*, for his more evident Conviction, sent
 Messengers to *Achan's* Tent; who finding the things
 hid, as he had confessed, brought them to the Assembly,
 and laid them before the Lord. And now *Achan* being
 duly convicted, by his own Confession and the Notori-
 ousness of the Fact, *Joshua* proceeded to Execution by
 the (*n*) express Command of God; which was thus:
 They take *Achan*, with the Garments, the Money, and
 Wedge of Gold, as Evidences of his Guilt, and with
 him his (*o*) Sons, his Daughters, his Cattle, his Tent,
 and all his Moveables, and brought them into the Val-
 ley of *Achor* (which from him took its Name, signifying
 Trouble) where he and his Family being first stoned,
 were afterwards burned, And to perpetuate the Me-
 mory of this for a Warning to others, they raised a
 great Heap of Stones over them.

The Wrath of God being appeased by this Executi-
 on, he encourages *Joshua* to attack *Ai* afresh, assuring
 him that he had given the King of *Ai* and all his People
 and Country into his Hand; and that he should do to
 them as he had done to *Jericho* and her King; only, for
 the Encouragement of the Soldiers, he allowed them
 the Plunder of the City and the Cattle for themselves;
 giving *Joshua* particular (*p*) Instructions to lay a Party
 of Men in (*q*) Ambuscade behind the City.

the Kings of *Babylon* formerly wore. The *Hebrews* call it *Sinbar*, that is, *Ba-
 bylonish*; for *Babylon* was in the Land of
Sbinar, *Gen. xi. 2.* Thence the *Latins*
 render it *Pallium Coccineum*, a Scarlet
 Cloak. The *Greeks* render it *Stooleen Poiki-
 leen*, a Garment of State of Divers Colours.
 But this Variety of Versions do all agree
 in this, that it was a rich Garment.

(*m*) *Wedge*. This was made in the
 Form of a Tongue, and for that Reason
 is not improperly sometimes called a
Tongue of Gold.

(*n*) *Express*. See *Josh. vii. 15.*

(*o*) *Sons, &c.* This Judgment only ap-

pertains to God, and to whom he will
 reveal it. To Man he hath expressly
 commanded, not to punish the Fathers
 for the Children, nor the Children for
 the Fathers sake, but that every one
 should be put to Death for his own Sin,
Deut. xxiv. 16.

(*p*) *Instructions*. God would not destroy
Ai by a Miracle, as he had done *Jericho*,
 because he had a Mind to make his Peo-
 ple formidable for their Power and Poli-
 cy to other Nations, with whom they
 were afterwards to engage.

(*q*) *Ambuscade*. This was the first Am-
 buscade we read of in History.

In order to this Action, *Joshua* selected thirty thousand Men, out of which he appointed five thousand to hide themselves between *Bethel* and *Ai*, who, upon the Signal that he should give them, which was by holding up a Spear with a Banner upon it, should enter the City, and set it on fire; himself having first by another Stratagem drawn all the Forces out of the Town to pursue him in his pretended Flight.

The Ambuscade being laid as he had directed, he drew up the Army before the North Part of the City of *Ai*, and towards Night he marched into the Valley in Sight of the Enemy to tempt them to sally out upon him. This succeeded as *Joshua* desired; for the King of *Ai* thinking he had them sure now, early the next Morning drew out all his Forces to give *Israel* Battle; who at the first Charge gave Way, and fled. This so animated the King of *Ai*'s Army, that concluding the *Israelites* fled indeed through Fear of them, they called out all the Citizens to assist in the Pursuit; which they eagerly did, leaving the Town naked and defenceless. But this Confidence of Victory cost them dear; for when *Joshua* by his sham Flight had drawn them a good Distance from the City, he gave the Signal to the Ambuscade, who immediately entered the City, and set it on fire. When *Joshua* by the Smoak perceived his Men had possessed themselves of the Town, he faced about, and charged the *Aian* Army; who, not in the least expecting the *Israelites* would rally, began to think of retiring into the City; but when they saw their City in Flames, they were so dispirited that they had no Power to fight or fly. In the meantime the Ambuscade having performed their Orders in burning the City, fell upon the Rear of the King of *Ai*'s dismayed Forces, who being thus encompassed were cut to Pieces.

Joshua having thus gained an entire Victory marched to *Ai*, and put all he found in it to the Sword: So that the Number of the Slain that Day amounted to twelve thousand Men and Women. The Cattle and Spoil of the City was given to the Soldiers, who burnt the City,
and

and made it a Heap of Rubbish. As for the King of *Ai*, he was taken Prisoner in the Fight; and being brought before the General, he was by his Command hanged on a Tree till (r) Sun-set; at which time he was taken down, and buried under a great Heap of Stones at the Entrance of the Gate of the City.

Joshua having thus happily succeeded in this Action against *Ai*, in Token of Gratitude to the great Giver of Victory, erected an Altar to him in Mount *Ebal*, as the Lord had by (s) *Moses* before commanded, on which he offered Burnt-Offerings, and sacrificed Peace-Offerings: And then he not only read unto the People, both *Israelites* and Strangers, the Words of the Law given by *Moses*, but wrote also upon great Stones a (t) Copy of the Law which *Moses* had written.

The Fame of the *Israelites* Success against *Jericho* and *Ai*, and the terrible Slaughter of the Inhabitants, alarm'd all the Kings on that side the *Jordan*; who consulting the common Security confederated together, entering into a League for their mutual Defence. But the *Gibeonites*, who were more deeply affected with the Rumour of the *Israelites* Courage and Power, distrusting a confederated Force against so great and numerous a People, and so well skilled in the Art of War, had recourse to a Stratagem to save themselves from the general Destruction, which they plainly perceived hung over their Heads. They chose a certain number of their Men, who were instructed to feign themselves to be Ambassadors come from a far Country to treat for Peace, and enter into a League with *Israel*. And to persuade them into a Belief of the great distance they lived from thence, they dressed themselves in old Cloaths, with old clouted Shoes on their Feet, and put dry mouldy Bread into old Sacks,

(r) *Sun-set*. This was in Pursuance of the Law. See *Deut.* xxi. 22, 23.

(s) *Moses*. See *Exod.* xx. 25. and *Deut.* xxvii. 5.

(t) *Copy*. It is no great Difficulty to

apprehend how many of the Gentile Nations came to imitate the *Jews* in many of their religious Observances and Rites, since the *Mosaick* Law was so publicly exposed to the Sight of all.

and Wine into * old Bottles. Thus accoutred they came to the *Israelitish* Camp at *Gilgal*, and presenting themselves before the General, told him they were come from a far Country, and desired to enter into a League with *Israel*. The People at first suspected these Ambassadors, and told them, that perhaps they possessed part of that Land which God had given them; and if so, they could not make a Peace with them. And *Joshua* put the Question directly to them, asking them, Who they were, and from whence they came? To which they cunningly, but falsely replied, “From a far Country are we come, “where we have heard of the Fame of the Lord thy “God; of all that he did for thee in *Egypt*, and to *Si-* “*hon* and *Og* the *Amorite* Kings. Wherefore our Go- “vernors bid us take Provision for our Journey, and tell “you we are your Servants, and desire to be in Amity “with you.” Then producing their mouldy Bread, their torn Bottles, and their old Cloaths and Shoes, they assured them that they took the Bread hot out of their Houses when they came from home; that their Bottles were then new; and that their Garments and Shoes were worn old by reason of the Length of their Journey. The *Israelites* in this suffered themselves to be outwitted; for they had a sure Way to have known the whole Truth of this Matter: But neglecting to ask Counsel at the Mouth of the Lord, they suffered themselves to be imposed upon by the seeming Simplicity of the subtil *Gibeonites*. This Stratagem of theirs had its desired Effect: The credulous *Israelites* believe the plausible Story of the *Gibeonites*, confirm’d sufficiently, as they thought, by demonstrable Tokens, and of which their own Eyes were Judges: So that without any further Hesitation or Scruple, they received them into their Alliance, *Joshua* making Peace with them to let them live, and the Princes of the Congregation swearing solemnly to observe it. But within

* *Old Bottles*. These Bottles were not of Glass or Earth, as those in Use now-
-dys; but were made of Leather, in

which they formerly, and now in some Countries, kept their Wine. See the Note on the Letter (x) in *Lib. VI. Alphabet first*.

three Days this Cheat was discovered; and they who pretended to come from a distant Country, proved to be their Neighbours, and inhabited a part of that Land which God had given *Israel* to possess.

When the *Israelites* found their new Allies had put a Trick upon them, and what noble Plunder the rich Cities of the *Gibeonites* would have afforded them, they could not forbear mutinying against the Princes who had sworn to observe the League; which they perceiving, endeavoured to pacify them by urging the Necessity they were under of keeping their Oath, lest they should incur God's Displeasure; and that tho' the Alliance extended to the saving their Lives, yet it did not exempt them from Tribute or Service, from which they might reap considerable Advantages, intending to make them Hewers of Wood, and Drawers of Water, for the Use of all the Congregation. This being approved appeased the People; and *Joshua*, calling for the *Gibeonites*, expostulates the Matter with them for thus imposing upon, and deceiving them: They in Excuse answer, that they were sensible God had given them all the Land where they dwelt, and commanded them to kill all the Inhabitants; and that they had made use of this Stratagem to save their Lives.

They did save their Lives indeed by this Trick, but were condemned to perpetual Bondage, and *Joshua* himself pronounced this Sentence against them; "Now therefore are ye cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being Bondmen, even Hewers of Wood, and Drawers of Water, for the (u) House of my God." The *Gibeonites*, glad to come off so, replied, "Behold we are in thy Hand, do to us what thou wilt." Thus *Joshua* delivered the *Gibeonites* from the Fury of the *Israelites*, who would have put them all to the Sword. But tho' they had by this Policy saved their

(u) House. From the *Gibeonites* being thus given or dedicated to the Service of the Tabernacle, and of all the Congregation, their Posterity, after the build-

ing of the Temple, were called *Nethinims* (that is, *Given*) in 1 Chron. ix. 2* and often so in other Places.

Lives with the Loss of their Liberty; yet their Neighbours the *Amorites* put them in fresh Danger of losing them: For deserting the common Interest, and making a separate League with *Israel* for themselves, they resolved to take Revenge of them. Accordingly *Adonizedek* King of (*) *Jebus* taking with him four neighbouring Kings, *Hobam* King of *Hebron*, *Piram* King of *Farmuth*, *Japhia* King of *Lachish*, and *Debir* King of *Eglon*, with their joined Forces they incamp before *Gibeon*. The *Gibeonites*, not daring to trust to the Strength of their City against so potent and confederated a Force, dispatch away Messengers to their new and great Allies to their Camp at *Gilgal*, to acquaint them, that the Kings of the *Amorites* that dwelt in the Mountains had arm'd against them, and to intreat them to come up to their Relief with Speed. *Joshua* was bound in Honour and Interest to succour them; to which God himself gave particular Encouragement, assuring him of Victory. Upon which *Joshua* by a swift March came up with them by Night, and surprized them in the Morning. The Action was hot for a time, but they were soon put to Flight; and as they fled, a Storm of Hail overtook them, which fell with such Violence upon them, that more were destroyed by the Hailstones than by the Sword. The five Confederate Kings, escaping the Storm of Hail, in their Flight made to a Cave in a Place called *Mak-kedah*, and there hid themselves from the Pursuit of the Enemy: But *Joshua*, having Intelligence of their Concealment, ordered the Cave to be block'd up, and set a Guard upon it to prevent their Escape; commanding the rest of the Army to continue the Pursuit, and to do Execution on their Enemies, lest they should retreat to any fortified Place. And that they might not want time to compleat their Victory, *Joshua*, addressing himself to God in Prayer, received Authority from him to command the Sun, in the Sight of *Israel*, to stand still, saying, "Sun, stand thou still upon *Gibeon*, and thou

(*) *Jebus*. This Place was afterwards, in *David's* Time, called *Jerusalem*.

“Moon in the Valley of *Ajalon*.” The great Machines obeyed, and stood unmoved at his Command. This was a long Day indeed ; for never before or since did God honour Man so much as to change the Course of Nature, and stop the Motion of the rolling Orbs.

Heaven thus miraculously assisting *Joshua* in gaining the Victory, he returns from the Chase, and ordering the Cave to be opened, where the five Kings lay hid, he commanded them to be brought before him. Then calling for the Officers of the Army, he bid them set their Feet upon the Necks of those Kings ; which they did. This was not to insult over the wretched Captives, but an emblematical Prediction of their future Success over the Enemies of God’s People : For thus, says *Joshua*, I will do to all that oppose you. Then commanding Execution to be done upon them, he caused them to be hanged up on several Trees until the Evening ; when he ordered them to be taken down, and cast into the Cave where they had hid themselves, making their intended Sanctuary their Sepulchre.

Joshua having thus successfully cleared the Field of his Enemies, the next Thing he undertakes is the reducing of the Cities. He marched first to *Makkedah*, then to *Libnah* ; from thence to *Lachish*, where he slew the King of Gezer, who came to the Relief of *Lachish*. From *Lachish* he marched to *Eglon*, from *Eglon* to *Hebron*, and from *Hebron* to *Debir*. All which Places he took by Storm, and put the Inhabitants, both Kings and People, to the Sword, as God had (x) commanded. *Joshua* having performed such great Exploits, and conquered so many Kings and Nations in (y) one Expedition thro’ the Assistance of the mighty God of *Israel*, returned with his victorious Army to his Camp at *Gilgal*.

These great Successes of *Israel* alarmed the more di-

(x) Commanded. See *Deut.* xx. v. 1, 17.

(y) One Expedition. All these great Achievements are by some Chronologers reckoned to have been performed in the first Year of *Joshua*’s Government, and

placed in the Year of the World 2553. But they rather seem to have extended into, if they did not wholly take up the Year 2554.

stant Nations, especially the *Hazorites*, whose King thinking it in vain for the Princes of *Canaan* to encounter singly with so puissant and victorious an Army, sends to *Jobab* King of *Madon*, to the King of *Shimron*, and to the King of *Achshaph*, and to all the neighbouring Princes within Reach, to invite them into a League, that with their united Force they might drive the *Israelites* out of the Land they had conquered.

Their Potentates the next Campaign with an almost innumerable Army prepare to fight *Joshua*; whose God, to chastise the Pride and Presumption of his Enemies, and to encourage his General, bids him not to fear them, “For to-morrow, *says he*, I will deliver them into the Hand of *Israel*, and thou shalt disable their Horses, and burn their Chariots.”

The Confederate Princes thinking themselves secure in their Numbers, little thought *Joshua* durst look them in the Face: But he, in pursuance of the Encouragement and Instructions God had given him, without Delay takes the Field, marches directly towards the Enemy, and falls so suddenly upon them, that he immediately routed them, and in the Pursuit put all to the Sword. And because *Jabin*, the King of *Hazor*, had been the Head of the Confederacy, he caused that City to be burnt to the Ground; but all the other Cities, whose Inhabitants were slain in the Action, he left standing, and gave the Cattle and Plunder of them to the Soldiers. Thus did *Joshua* by (2) Degrees recover all the Land of *Canaan*, subduing the People that possessed it, and slaying all their Kings, one and thirty in Number, with the *Anakims* or Giants, of whom he left none remaining, except in *Gaza*, *Gath*, and *Ashdod*. (a) And now *Joshua* began

(2) *Degrees*. These great Achievements may be allowed to have taken up some Years. And indeed in *Josh. xi. 18.* it is said, *Joshua made War a long Time with all those Kings.* And from *Caleb's Words* in *Chap. xiv. v. 6, & 10.* where he says, *It is five and forty Years* since he was sent as a Spy into the Land, it may rea-

sonably be gathered, that between six and seven Years were spent in this War.

(a) *And, &c.* The other Things which are mentioned in the Book of *Joshua*, may be supposed to have taken up the rest of *Joshua's* Time: As the Dividing the Land among the nine Tribes and half by Lot, from *Chap. xiv.* to *Chap. xix.*

(For

40

JOSHUA CHAP. XI.

Joshua houghs the horses & burns y^e chariots.



JOSHUA II. Verse 9.

*And Joshua did unto them as the
LORD had him he houghed their
horses, & burnt their chariots with fire.*

276.

gan to think of a Settlement, which he did by dividing the Land beyond *Jordan* among the nine Tribes and half; who being settled in their several Possessions, *Joshua* set up the Tabernacle at *Shiloh*. Then calling the *Reubenites*, *Gadites*, and half Tribe of *Manasseh*, and acknowledging that they had faithfully kept their Covenant in accompanying their Brethren, and helping them to subdue their Enemies, he kindly dismissed them, advising them to continue stedfast in their Duty to God; and giving them his Blessing, they returned to their Families loaded with Spoils, consisting of Gold, Brasses, Iron, Raiment, and very much Cattle, which was their Share of the Plunder taken from the Enemy during the War.

These two Tribes and half being safely arrived on the Borders of the *Jordan*, erected an Altar, not for any religious Use, but as a Memorial to succeeding Ages, that tho' they were parted from their Brethren by the *Jordan*, yet they were all of one Extraction and Religion, and had equal Right to the Altar of the Lord at *Shiloh*, and the Worship performed there. This had like to have proved of fatal Consequence, and occasion'd a War between them and the other Tribes; to whom the Matter being either misrepresented, or they misapprehending it, and suspecting their Brethren on the other Side the *Jordan* were about to revolt from God and them, they unanimously assemble their Forces at *Shiloh*, in order to declare War against them. But before they proceeded to Extremities, they chose ten Princes, one out of each Tribe, and they the Chiefs of their Families, with *Phineas* and *Eleazar*, and sent them away to enquire into the Cause of this new-erected Altar.

As soon as they were come to them, they fell very roughly upon them, charging them with Rebellion a-

(For the Tribes of *Reuben* and *Gad*, and the half Tribe of *Manasseh*, had their Portions assigned, and given them on the other Side of the *Jordan* by *Moses* himself, *Numb.* xxxii. which is in *Josh.* xiii. 20, 21. repeated, and the Lots described) The setting up of the Tabernacle at *Shiloh*, *Cbap.* xviii. 1. the appointing Ci-

ties of *Refuge* for the *Manlayer*, *Cb.* xx. the setting out Cities for the *Levites*, some out of each Tribe, *Cb.* xxi. with many other Things of more particular Concern, which being not historical, I have thought fit to omit in the Text, and from hence refer the Reader to the Texts above-mentioned, and what follows.

gainst the Lord ; and, to aggravate the Matter, they put them in Mind of the Sin of (b) *Peor*; and to let them see that it was not out of an officious busy Temper or Humour that they came to them thus, but out of a generous Concern for the whole People, they said, “ If you
 “ thus rebel against the Lord, he will soon be angry
 “ with the whole Congregation of *Israel*.” This they inforce by the late Instance of *Achan*. And to prevent any Objection, and take from them all Pretence of Excuse or Defence, they add, “ If ye have done this from
 “ any Apprehension, that the Land ye possess on that
 “ Side the *Jordan* is unclean, or less holy than ours, because the Tabernacle is on our Side the River, return
 “ and settle amongst us, where the Tabernacle resteth :
 “ But by no Means rebel against the Lord, nor us, in
 “ building you an Altar besides the Altar of the Lord.” The *Reubenites*, *Gadites*, and *Manassites*, were very much concerned at the ill Opinion their Brethren entertained of them : But well knowing their own Innocency, with a solemn Appeal to God, return Answer to *Phineas* and his Companions in this Manner: “ The
 “ Lord God of the whole World, and all *Israel*, shall
 “ know how innocent we are of the Rebellion with
 “ which you charge us. If we have set up an Altar in
 “ Opposition to the Lord’s Altar, let him judge and
 “ punish us, neither do ye shew us any Favour. But
 “ when you shall know the Truth, you will find what
 “ we have done was to prevent what you fear. For we
 “ consider’d that in Time to come your Children might
 “ say unto our Children, What have ye to do with the
 “ Lord God of *Israel*? For since the Lord hath made
 “ the *Jordan* a Border and Bound between us and you,
 “ you have no Part in the Lord ; that is, you do not belong to the Congregation of the Lord, nor have any
 “ Right to come before his Tabernacle, nor to offer
 “ upon his Altar ; and so your Children might be an
 “ Occasion to our Children to turn Rebels to the Lord.

(b) *Peor*. See *Numb.* xxv. for which Sin of *Peor*, the Plague was sent among the Congregation.

“ Therefore we agreed to build an Altar, not for Burnt-
 “ Offering, nor for Sacrifice, but to be a Witness be-
 “ tween you and us, and our Generations after us; that
 “ when we should come to perform Service to the
 “ Lord with our Burnt-Offering and Sacrifice before
 “ him, if your Children should say unto ours, Ye have
 “ no Part in the Lord; our Children might reply, Be-
 “ hold the Pattern of the Altar of the Lord, which our
 “ Fathers made, not to sacrifice upon, but to be a Wit-
 “ ness between us and you. But as to the Matter you
 “ charge us with, God forbid that we should rebel a-
 “ gainst the Lord, and turn this Day from following
 “ the Lord; to build an Altar for Burnt-Offerings,
 “ Meat-Offerings, or Sacrifices, besides the Altar of
 “ our God, that is before his Tabernacle.”

When *Phineas*, and the Princes of the People that were with him, heard this fair and just Vindication of the *Reubenites* and the rest, they could not forbear shewing great Satisfaction; and being overjoyed at the Proof of their Innocence, *Phineas* looking upon this as a happy Token of God's Presence among them, testifies the same to the injur'd *Reubenites*, assuring them by this Test of their Loyalty to God, that he was still present with them. Then taking Leave of their Brethren, they return in Triumph to the *Israelites* at *Shiloh*, who with infinite Pleasure and Joy receive the good Tidings of their Brethrens Innocence, and of their pious Care and Zeal to preserve their Posterity in the Fear and Service of the true God: And changing their angry Thoughts of War into those of Tenderneſs and Peace, they bleſs God for the happy Issue of this dangerous Affair. As for the *Reubenites* and their Brethren, to prevent any future Jealousy or Suspicion of their Intentions, they called the Altar which they had built *ED*, which signifies a Witness, adding this as the Reason of the Name; “ For it shall be a Witness between us and our Bre-
 “ thren, the other Tribes of *Israel*, that the Lord is
 “ God.” Intimating by this, that tho' they lived at a

Distance from the rest of their Brethren, yet both had but one God, who was the God of *Israel*.

After this, *Joshua* reaped the Fruits of his Victories in the quiet Enjoyment of Peace; and at last being grown old, and foreseeing his End to be near at Hand, he caused all *Israel* to be assembled; to whom he thus briefly enumerated the Blessings God had bestowed on their Ancestors and themselves: “Your Fathers dwelt on the
“ other Side of the *Jordan*, from whence the Lord
“ brought *Abraham* his Servant to this happy Country,
“ where he blessed his old Age with a Son, and that Son
“ with two others, *Jacob* and *Esau*. *Esau* possessed
“ Mount *Seir*; but *Jacob* and his Family went into
“ *Egypt*; where their Posterity remained under slavish
“ Bondage, till God sent *Moses* and *Aaron* to deliver
“ them. You cannot be ignorant of the Wonders God
“ wrought by their Hands, when he plagued *Egypt* for
“ their Sakes, nor of his Care in protecting them against
“ the *Amorites*. Yourselves have lately seen confederated Nations fall before you, and the Power of the Almighty hath always pathed out the Way to an easy Victory for you over all your Enemies. And now
“ at last he hath left you in quiet Possession of a Land
“ that aboundeth with all Manner of Plenty; whose
“ happy Soil, without your Labour, yields the comfortable Product of all that Nature can give. In
“ Recompence for all this, your great Protector and
“ Benefactor requires only an exact Obedience to his
“ Laws.” Then solemnly declaring, “That what
“ Course soever the rest should take, he and his House
“ would serve the Lord;” and exhorting them to a faithful Observance of the Laws of God, he invited them to renew the Covenant with God. Which having done in very ample and significant Terms, he wrote the Words of their Covenant in the Book of the Law of God. Then setting up a great Stone under an Oak by the Sanctuary of the Lord, he bid the People take Notice, That that very Stone should be a
Witness

Witness to them, to put them in mind of the Covenant which they had made, to prevent them hereafter from denying their God.

Soon after this, *Joshua* being arrived at the hundred and tenth Year of his Age died, and was buried in the Border of his Inheritance, in *Timnath-Sera*, in Mount *Ephraim*; which City, upon the Division of the Land amongst the Tribes, the Children of *Israel* by (c) God's Direction gave unto him, in token of Gratitude for the many Services and Benefits they had received by his Administration. Much about the same time also died *Eleazer*, the Son of *Aaron* the Priest, whom they buried in a Hill which was given him in Mount *Ephraim*, and which descended to *Phineas* his Son and Successor in the Priesthood.

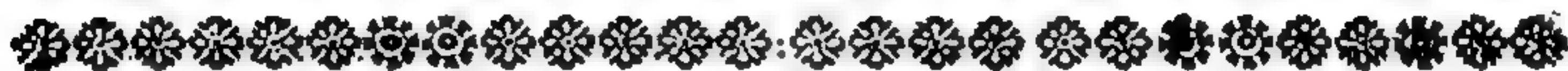
The Children of *Israel*, as has been said at the End of the first Book, being obliged by Oath to carry *Joseph's* Bones with them when they should be delivered from the *Egyptian* Bondage, having them still with them, now bethought themselves of the Obligation they lay under to perform their Ancestors Engagement; they therefore buried *Joseph's* Bones in *Sechem*, in a Parcel of Ground which *Jacob* had formerly bought of the Son of *Hamor*, the Father of *Sechem*; which Parcel of Ground afterwards became the Inheritance of *Joseph's* Posterity.

(c) God's Direction. See *Joshua* xix. v. 49, 50.

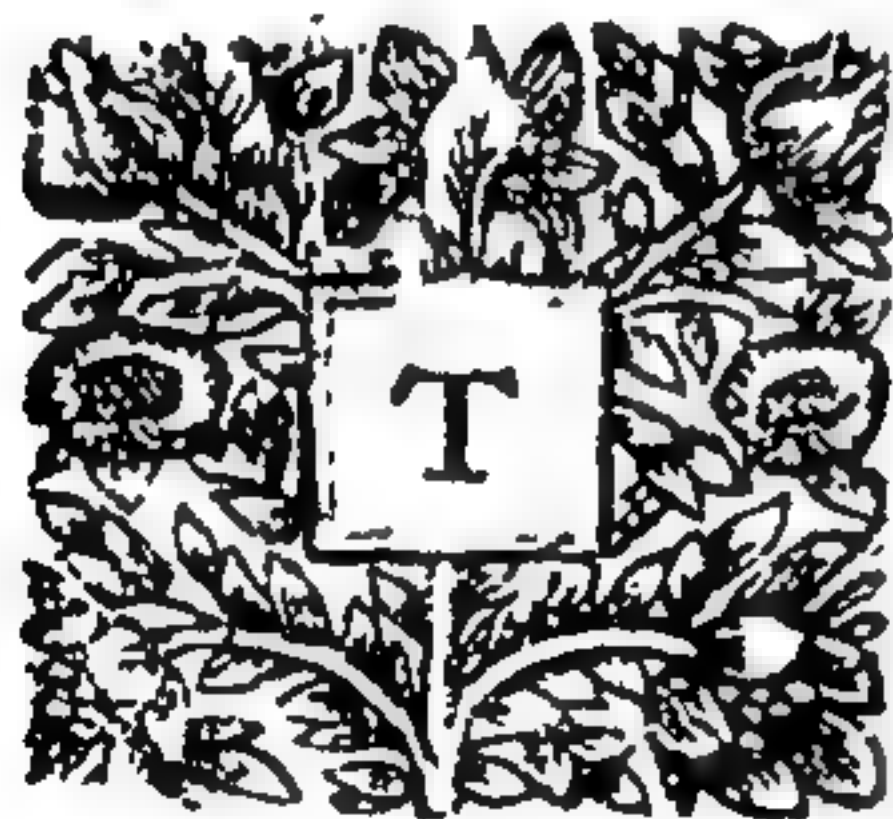




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BOOK IV.



THE (*d*) *Israelites* as yet having *Joshua's* Exhortation fresh in their Memory, and being warned of the dangerous Consequence of their Ancestors Murmurings, dare not undertake any Thing without God's Direction. And there still remaining several of the *Canaanitish* Kings unconquered, and who might be troublesome to them, they unanimously

(*d*) *The Israelites.* After the Death of *Joshua*, the *Israelites* were long without any King or Sovereign. Every Tribe, being govern'd by its Elders, chose its own Commanders for War, and they by Degrees subdued the rest of the Inhabitants of the Country, either destroying or making them Tributaries. The Neighbouring

Kings made War on, and sometimes subdued them; but God from Time to Time raised some Persons, who delivered them from their Oppressions. In Acknowledgment for which Benefit the People appointed them their Judges, that is, their supreme *Magistrates*, to administer Justice, and govern them.

repair

repair to the sacred Oracle at *Shiloh*, to ask Direction, who should go first up for them to fight the *Canaanites*. The Lord gave this first Post of Honour to the Tribe of *Judab*, with an Assurance of Victory. Whereupon they invited the Tribe of *Simeon*, whose Lot lay within theirs, to accompany them in this Expedition; they promised them, if they would join Forces with them now, they would do the like for them afterwards. *Simeon* agrees; and taking the Field they both attack the cruel King of *Bezek*, who having fortified himself in his City, could not long hold out against victorious *Israel*; but seeing his heartless Troops give Way, quits the Place, and endeavours by ignoble Flight to save his Life. But in vain; for the *Israelites* having taken the Town, and put ten thousand of the People to the Sword, they pursue *Adonibezek* the King, and having taken him, they cut off his Thumbs and great Toes. This Execution drew from the Tyrant an Acknowledgment of the Justice of God upon him; for he confessed, he had cut off the Thumbs and great Toes of no less than seventy Kings, whom in this mangled Condition he made to gather their Meat like Dogs under his Table.

The old City (e) *Jebus*, with its Territories, lay in two Parts: Of which one Part fell to the Lot of *Judab*, the other Part to that of *Benjamin*. *Judab* soon over-run that Part of it that belonged to him, and having put the Inhabitants to the Sword, set the Place on Fire. Hither it was they brought the Captive King *Adonibezek*, where he died.

The next March of the *Israelites* was against the *Canaanites* that dwelt to the Southward on the Mountains, and in the Plains; where having taken *Hebron*, they marched to attack *Debir*, which was a Part of *Caleb's* Portion, but possessed by the *Canaanites*. This being *Caleb's* Property, notwithstanding his great Age, he re-

(e) *Jebus*. This City and its Territories had hitherto been possessed by the *Jebusites*, who sprung from *Jebusi*, the third Son of *Canaan*, Gen. x. 16. It is in *Judg.*

i. 8. called *Jerusalem*, which Name it had till long after; for after that the *Israelites* had sacked and burnt it, it was rebuilt again, and possessed by the *Jebusites*.

solves to storm the Place; and to encourage his Men the more in this brave Attempt, he made Proclamation in his Camp, that he would give *Achsab* his Daughter to the brave Hero who should attack and take the Town. The Hopes of this beautiful Prize raised in all the Youth a generous Emulation, and spurred them on to Love and Glory: But none came near the brave (f) *Othniel*, whose conquering Sword at the Head of his Party hews down all before him, and paves the Way to Victory. In short, he won the Place, and with it the fair Prize.

Othniel's Gallantry being thus nobly rewarded by *Caleb*, the beauteous *Achsab* thinking herself not a sufficient Gratuity for the Service of her valiant Hero, puts him upon asking of her Father a Parcel of Land which lay commodiously by their Estate. *Othniel* thinking his Service already over-paid, seems backward in the Request; therefore *Achsab* addressing herself to her Father *Caleb*, desired him in general Terms to give her a Blessing, but more particularly she thus applied to him; "Thou hast already given me a pleasant Estate in the
" South Part of the Country; but it is hot and dry,
" and likely to prove barren; give me I pray thee this
" Parcel of Land, which is well watered." Upon which, the generous Parent granted her Request, giving her the upper and lower (g) Springs.

Old *Caleb*, though he had passed his (h) eighty-fifth Year, yet retaining his youthful Strength and Vigour, pushes on his good Fortune, and takes *Hebron*, as has been already said, with other Places, expelling the Gigantick Race of *Anak*; but the Inhabitants of the Valley kept their Ground, being a hardy People, and well provided with warlike Ammunition, such as Iron Chariots, &c.

Those of *Joseph's* Family, that went up against *Bethel*, did by the Assistance of the Lord prevail; for

(f) *Othniel*, He was somewhat of Kin to *Caleb*, being, as *Tremellius* and *Junius* say, of the Posterity of *Kenaz*; from whom *Caleb* being descended, was there-

fore called the *Kenazite*, *Numb.* xxxii. 12. and *Josh.* xiv. v. 14.

(g) *Springs*. See *Judg.* i. 15.

(h) *Eighty*. See *Josh.* xiv. 11, 12.

sending out Spies to discover the City, they seeing a Man come out of it seized him, and promised him Mercy if he would shew them the Avenues to it. The Man, to save his Life, gave them the best Information he could; by which they so well succeeded, that having given Notice to the rest of their Forces to join them, they entered the Town, and put the Inhabitants to the Sword, except the Man that had discovered the Entrance, with his Family.

As for the other Tribes, they also possessed themselves of the Lands allotted them; but did not destroy the Inhabitants, contenting themselves with making them tributary, and suffering them to dwell promiscuously amongst them. Only the Children of *Dan* were so unsuccessful against the *Amorites*, that they were forced to quit the Plains, and retire to the mountainous Parts of the Country, where they were kept pent up for a Time. But the rest of the *Israelites*, who had been successful against the *Canaanites* and *Amorites*, fell into a great Error; for, either thro' Lenity or Covetousness, not making the right Use of their Victories, as they were expressly (i) commanded by God, they not only permitted them to live, but encouraged them to trade and deal with them. This Disobedience and Neglect of the Divine Precept not only proved a Snare to them, but likewise incensed God against them; who, to make them sensible of their Folly, sent an (k) Angel to remind them of the many Favours he had bestowed upon them, in delivering them out of *Egypt*, and bringing them into that good Land, and of his Faithfulness in keeping his Covenant with them, which they had so unfaithfully violated; by which Ingratitude they had provoked God to withdraw his Help and Protection from them.

(i) Commanded. See *Exod.* xxiii. v. 32, 33. *Deut.* vii. 2, &c.

(k) Angel. That is, a Messenger, for so the Word implies. The Rabbins will have this Messenger to be *Phineas* the

Priest. But by the Words of the Text, *Judg.* i. 1. it must be an Angel, or divine Messenger, by whose Mouth God declared, *I brought you out of Egypt*; which could not be applied to *Phineas*.

This Reproach for the present brought the People to themselves, and made them so sensible of their Sin that they fell into a general Weeping, deplored the Wretchedness of their Condition, and offered Sacrifice to the Lord to appease his Wrath, calling the Name of the Place where they received this Reproof *Bochim*, which signifies Weepers. * But scarce were their Tears wiped off at *Bochim*, when they, forsaking the Lord God of their Fathers, fell into open Idolatry, worshipping (l) *Baal* and *Ashteroth*, the Idols of the Heathens; which so provoked the Lord, that he (m) often suffered them to be taken and enslaved by their Enemies. But that which brought these Calamities upon them, was their Favour to those Enemies with whom God had forbid them all Manner of (n) Correspondence. For, besides that it was expressly forbidden in the Law, *Joshua* but just before his Death had particularly warned them of the Danger they would fall into, if they should entertain any Familiarity with those Nations that God had doomed to Destruction: And above all things, he laid a most strict Charge on

* Mention was made in *Josh. xxiv. 31.* (and the same is repeated here, *Judg. ii. v. 7.*) that the People of *Israel* served the Lord all the Days of *Joshua*, and all the Days of the Elders that out-lived *Joshua*, who had seen all the great Works of the Lord that he wrought for *Israel*. But when that Generation was dead, and there arose another Generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the Works which he had done for *Israel*, v. 10. The Children of *Israel* did Evil in the Sight of the Lord, and served *Baalim*, v. 11. that is, the less, or Tutelar Gods, so called, of the several Nations about them.

(l) *Baal* and *Ashteroth*. That is, Idols or Gods of the Heathens: For by *Baal*, or *Baalim*, were signified all the Male Gods, as the Females were by *Ashteroth*, which was the Idol of the *Zidonians*, represented in the Form of a Sheep. The first Idol, or *Baal*, was that of *Nimrod*, which the *Affyrians* worshipped: For *Nimrod* was *Baal* or *Belus*, the Father of *Ninus*, Husband to *Semiramis*. And

Baal, *Bal*, *Beel*, *Bel*, *Belus*, &c. are the same. From the *Affyrians* the *Babylonians* took the Idol and Worship of *Belus*; as it is plain in the History of *Bel* and the Dragon; (which, according to the *Latins*, is the fourteenth Chapter of *Daniel*.) And from the *Babylonians* the *Zidonians* and *Phœnicians* took them. Hence all the Idols or Gods of the Heathens, by an extensive Name, were called *Baal*, *Bel*, *Baalim*. And from the Variety of Gods, or their Places and Events, they were named, as *Beelphegor*, that is, *Priapus* the lustful God; *Beelzebub*, the God of Flies; *Beelzebub*, the God of the Eagles, or *Mercury*; *Baalgad*, the God Fortune. And from the Word *Baal* are compounded several *African* Names (which Language, as well as Country, bordered on the *Hebrews*) as *Hannibal*, that is, Lord of Camps; *Hafdrubal*, Lord of Villages, &c.

(m) Often. See *Judg. ii.* from the fourteenth Verse to the End of the Chapter.

(n) Correspondence. See the Note at the last Letter (k).

them

them to take Care that they did not marry with them, which he knew would naturally lead them to Idolatry. Yet, notwithstanding they knew all this, they so far indulged themselves in a loose Conversation with the *Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Amorites, Hivites, and Jebusites*, that forgetting the Obligation they lay under, they made Intermarriages with them; the immediate Consequence of which was, that they served their (c) Gods.

By these Provocations, God was so incensed against *Israel*, that he left them to themselves; who without his Care and Protection, made but a poor Defence against their Enemies: For *Cushan-rishathaim*, King of *Mesopotamia*, invading them, made an easy Conquest of them, and enslaved them for eight Years. During which Time of Servitude, the *Israelites* coming to a Sense and Acknowledgment of their Transgressions, and crying to the Lord for Help, he raised up a Deliverer for them. This was the brave *Othniel*, who, in Recompence of his Valour, had married *Caleb's* Daughter. This Hero, being divinely (p) inspired, undertook the Deliverance of the *Israelites*, defeated *Cushan-rishathaim*, King of *Mesopotamia*; and by this Victory over the *Syrians*, procured to the *Israelites* a Peace of (q) forty Years; during which Time *Othniel* governed *Israel*, and was the first of those we call Judges.

The *Israelites* having, under *Othniel's* peaceful Administration, enjoyed an uninterrupted Rest and Tranquillity, grew wanton; and ungratefully forgetting the former Favours and Benefits God had bestowed upon them, lapsed into their former Sins of Apostasy

(c) Gods. See *Judg.* iii. 6.

(p) Inspired. All virtuous Qualities, whether natural, or supernatural, are in the Holy Scripture called the Spirit of the Lord. Thus *Bezaleel*, *Exod.* xxxi. 3. is said to be filled with the Spirit of God, when he was appointed to build the Tabernacle. The same is said of *Gideon*, *Sampson*, *Saul*, and others.

(q) Forty Years. That is, from the Death of *Joshua*, as some compute it; but it must be in all Probability from the Time of their Deliverance by the Conduct of *Othniel*, who *Du Pin* says, (and with great Reason) governed *Israel* in Peace for the Space of forty Years.

and Corruption in Religion ; of which the two following (r) Stories are notorious Instances.

There was about this time a devout Woman of the Tribe of *Dan*, who thro' a mistaken Zeal had dedicated a Sum of Money to the Lord, and laid it by, intending her Son should make with it an Idol. Her Son, whose Name was *Micah*, finding the Money, but not knowing to what Use his Mother had devoted it, took it for himself. She missing the Money, and not suspecting her Son, did in his Presence curse the sacrilegious Thief ; which so frightened the Son, that he confessed the Fact, and restored it to her, being in all eleven hundred (s) Shekels of Silver. The Mother having received her Money again, took two hundred Shekels of it, and gave them to a Founder to make an Idol ; which being done, she placed it in the House of her Son's Gods ; for he had made a (t) *Teraphim* and an *Ephod*,
and

(r) *Stories.* These two Stories are mentioned in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth Chapters of *Judges* ; and being disposed toward the End of the Book, seem as if they belonged to later Times ; but in the Judgment of most learned Men, they were transacted about this Time. Their Reasons are too many to recount ; I therefore chuse to insert these Stories here, as the most likely Times for such Evils to have been committed in. For it is plain from the Text, that these Things happened when *there was no King* (that is, *Ruler* ; for, properly speaking, there had been hitherto no King) in Israel ; but every Man did that which was right in his own Eyes, Ch. xvii. 6. xviii. 1. xix. 1.

(s) *Shekels.* Which, if common Shekels, at one Shilling three Pence each, would amount to sixty-eight Pounds and fifteen Shillings of *English* Money ; but if Shekels of the Sanctuary, double that Sum.

(t) *Teraphim.* We have already spoken something of *Teraphim* in the Story of *Jacob's* Flight from *Laban*, when *Rachel* took away with her her Father's *Teraphim*. But of this a little more now : *Teraphim* were Images ; for the most Part of Men, but sometimes of other Creatures ; as particularly Dogs, for their Watchfulness in guarding the House. This

latter Sort were accounted *Tutelar*, or *Protecting* Gods, answerable to the *Lares* and *Penates*, or Household Gods, amongst the *Romans*. Those *Teraphims*, which bore the Image of a Man, or at least, of the Head of a Man, were used as Oracles to be consulted with, and enquired of, in any doubtful or hidden Matter. These were consecrated by Magical Art, to engage some *Evil Spirit* to speak through them, and give Answers to the Enquirers. *Laban's* Gods, which his Daughter *Rachel* stole from him, and are called *Teraphim*, Gen. xxxi. 19. are thought by some to have been such *Oracular Images* ; and that she therefore took them that her Father might not, by consulting them, know which Way her Husband was gone. But this with some looks too gross, who rather think they were but the common *Penates*, or Household Gods. But now, though the Times, in which this Story of *Micah* was transacted, were evil, and the People, for Want of Government, and by intermingling with the Heathen Nations, were very much corrupted ; yet it is hard to conceive that they could be already so far degenerated as to set up these *Oracular Images*, to ask Counsel of the Devil by. But it is probable they thought they might worship God by or through Images (as too many, who are called
Christians

and (u) consecrated one of his Sons to be his Priest for a while, till he could procure a *Levite*. Which was not long first; for soon after, a certain young Man, that was a *Levite*, and had dwelt some time at *Beth-lehem-Judah*, travelling from thence to seek a better Settlement, came in his Way to *Micah's* House in Mount *Ephraim*. *Micah*, glad of this Opportunity, invited the young *Levite* to dwell with him, and be to him a (w) Father and a Priest, offering him for his Wages ten Shekels of Silver by the Year, his Diet, and two Suits of Apparel, one for common wearing, and the other to officiate in. The *Levite* liking the Terms closes with *Micah*, and became one of his Family. On the other hand, *Micah* was as much pleased in the Hopes and Confidence that the Lord would prosper him, because he had gotten a (x) *Levite* to be his Priest.

About the same time, some of the Tribe of *Dan* finding the Lot, which fell to them upon the Division of the Land in (y) *Joshua's* Time, too little for them, and they not enjoying all that neither (for the *Amorites*, as has been already said, would not suffer them to possess the Valley, which was the best and richest Part,

Christians, at this Day do) for it is evident from the Text, *Judg.* xvii. 3. that *Micah's* Mother dedicated her Money to the Lord, which she designed for the making of Images; and *Micah* himself, when he made the *Teraphim*, made also an *Ephod*, v. 5. which was a Garment appointed by God for the Priest to wear, *Exod.* xxviii. 4. and by which they did ask Counsel of God, as in the Case of *David*, 1 *Sam.* xxx. 7, 8.

(u) Consecrated. This was a great Abuse, and imputable to the Licentiousness of the Times, when every one did what seemed right in his own Eyes. What is here, *Judg.* xvii. 5. render'd Consecrating, is originally filling the Hand, and is a Hebrew Phrase; Consecrating being performed as well by filling the Hand with Gifts and Victims, as by the anointing Oil.

(w) Father. The Priest was called a Father for Reverence Sake, being indeed a spiritual Father to the Laity, as having Care of their Souls, and Charge of the Holy Things. Thus are Preceptors cal-

led Fathers to their Pupils, Senators Fathers to the Citizens, Princes Fathers of their Countries, &c.

(x) *Levite*. Who this young *Levite* was, is hard to say. He is called *Jonathan*, the Son of *Gershom*, the Son of *Manasseh*, *Ch.* xviii. 30. But who this *Manasseh* was, is uncertain. *Tremellius* and *Junius* call *Jonathan* *Pronepos Moschis*, ex *Manasseh*. *Annot.* on *Judg.* xvii. 1. As if *Manasseh* had been *Moses's* Son, *Gershom* *Moses's* Grandson, and this *Jonathan* *Moses's* Great Grandson. But since we read of no more than two Sons that *Moses* had, viz. *Gershom* and *Eliezer*, *Exod.* xviii. 4. this must be consider'd some other Way. The old *Latin* Translation, which is called *St. Jeron's*, reads it, *Jonathan the Son of Gershom, the Son of Moses*. And another says, the *Hebrews* read *Moses* for *Manasseh*; which sounds most likely, if any such *Jonathan* Son of *Gershom* can be found, and whose Age may suit the Time of this Story.

(y) *Joshua's*. See *Josh.* xix. 47.

but forced them up into the Mountains) they were fain to seek out more Room to enlarge their Quarters. Whereupon, chusing out five Men of Courage, they sent them to take a View of the Country. These Spies in their Travels light upon *Micab's* House, where they were entertained; and knowing the young *Levite* by his Voice, they asked him how he came thither, and what Business he had there. He told them what Agreement *Micab* had made with him, and that he was *Micab's* Priest. When they heard this, they desired him to ask Counsel of God, that they might know whether their Journey would be prosperous or no. With this Encouragement they went on till they came to *Laish*; where observing the People lived very secure and careless, without any sort of Discipline or Government, they concluded it would be no difficult Matter to conquer them, and take Possession of the Place. And with this Report they returned to their Friends, giving them an Account that the Land abounded with all Necessaries for Life.

The *Danites* embrace the Opportunity, and arming a Party of six hundred Men, they sent them to take Possession of the City of *Laish*. These marching through Mount *Ephraim* came in their Way by *Micab's* House, where making a Halt, the five Spies, who were Guides to this Party, and had been there before, acquainted the rest that there were in that House an *Ephod* and *Teraphim*, and a graven and a molten Image, with them to consider whether they had best tarry there to ask Counsel of the Lord concerning the Success of their Enterprize, or take the *Ephod* and Images with them, to consult upon all Occasions. The last seemed most expedient; for the five Spies that were the Guides, leaving the Party at the Gates, went into the House: *Micab* being from home, they saluted the *Levite*, whom they sent to the Gate to talk with the *Danites*; and whilst they entertained him without, the Guides, having been there before, and knowing the Rooms of the House, plundered it of the *Ephod*, the *Teraphim*, and other Images, and brought them

them out to their Brethren at the Gate. The Priest seeing this was amazed at the Boldness of the Attempt, and asked them what they meant by it. They bid him be silent, and consider whether it were better for him to be a Priest to a single Family, or a whole Tribe in *Israel*. This advantageous Offer soon gained the young Priest to their Side, who joined with them, and went off with the Plunder.

Micab returning, and understanding that his Priest and Gods were gone, gathers as many Friends as he could, and pursues the *Danites*. But they were a long Way from his House before he could overtake them: At length, coming within View of them, some of the *Danite* Soldiers in the Rear heard them make an Outcry; and facing about, asked *Micab* why he made such an Outcry. He told them they had robbed him. Upon which the *Danites* advised him to be silent; for if they provoked the rest of the Party, it would cost them their Lives. *Micab* finding himself over-match'd, was forced to put up the Wrong, and return home without either Gods or Priest.

The *Danites* having thus got rid of *Micab* and his Friends, continuing their March came in a short Time to *Laiſh*; and finding the People quiet and secure, they set the City on Fire, and surprising the Inhabitants, who were busy in putting out the Fire, they put them all to the Sword. Afterwards rebuilding the City, they call'd it *Dan*, after the Name of their Father; and settling there, they set up *Micab's* graven Image, which they had stolen from him; and making the young *Levite Jonathan* their Priest, he and his Sons continued to officiate as Priests to the Tribe of *Dan* all the Time that the House of God was in *Shiloh*, until the Captivity of the Land, which is reckoned to be till the Ark in *Eli's* Time was taken by the (x) *Philistines*, about three hundred Years after this.

(x) *Philistines*. See 1 Sam. iv.

This Story is an Instance of the great Apostacy, and Corruption of Religion among the *Israelites* : That which follows is as pregnant a Proof of Immorality and Depravation of Manners amongst them, which was thus :

A *Levite* that dwelt on the Side of Mount *Ephraim* having taken a Wife out of *Bethlehem-Judah*, she proved a lewd Woman, and either through Fear or Shame left her Husband, and ran home to her Father at *Bethlehem-Judah*, where she tarried four Months. In which Time her Husband having somewhat digested the Injury, went at the four Months End to her Father's, with an Intent to be reconciled to her, and bring her Home with him ; in order to which he took a Servant and a Couple of Asses. Being arrived at her Father's House, he was received with great Joy, and entertained for three Days. At the Importunity of the Father he stays the fourth Day, and was kept till the Afternoon the next Day ; but the *Levite* resolving to be gone, took his Leave, and with his Wife and Servant set out. By that time they were got as far as (a) *Jebus* the Day was far spent, and the Servant fearing to be benighted desired his Master to put in there. But the Place not being fully possessed and inhabited by *Israelites*, he endeavoured to reach (b) *Gibeab*, whither they arrived just at Sun-set ; and sitting down in the Street, as the Custom of Travellers then was, they waited to see who would invite them to a Lodging. After long waiting an old Man came from his Work out of the Field, and seeing Strangers sitting in the Street, went up to them, and saluted them ; asked whence they came, and whither they were travelling. The *Levite* told him, and complained of the Incivility of the People, none having invited him to a Lodging, though he had his own Provisions with him. The hospitable old Man, who was of Mount *Ephraim*, tho' he dwelt at *Gibeab*,

(a) *Jebus*. This was that Part of *Jerusalem* which belonged to *Benjamin*, but was possessed chiefly by the *Jebusites*.

(b) *Gibeab*. This City belonged to the Tribe of *Benjamin*, and is also called *Ramah*.

JUDGES CHAP. XIX.

The Levites concubine found dead.



JUDGES 19. Verse 26.

*Then came the woman in the dawning
of the day, and fell down at the door of
the mans house where her lord was, etc.*

courteously invited them to lodge at his House, where he entertained them very frankly. Whilst they were at Supper, the Men of the City having observed where they put in, came to the House, and knocking with great Violence at the Door, demanded of the Master of the House to deliver the Man that came in there, that they might (c) know him. The good old Man, to prevent Danger to his Guests, ventur'd amongst this tumultuous Rabble to appease them, offering them his only Daughter, who was a Virgin, and the *Levite's* Concubine, to use at their Pleasure, provided they would not offer any Violence to his Guest. This would not do; whereupon the *Levite* seeing them so outrageous, to save himself, turned his (d) Concubine out amongst them, who abused her all Night, not letting her go till Break of Day; and then she returning to the House where her Lord lay, fell down dead at the Door, her Hands lying upon the Threshold. The *Levite* opening the Door, and seeing her lie there, concluded she was asleep, and therefore bid her get up, that they might be going; but when he perceived she was dead, he took her up, and, making no Complaint there, laid her upon one of the Asses, and hastened home as fast as he could. And now he had Time to meditate a Revenge suitable to the Affront, which he in this horrid Manner express'd: He divides his dead Concubine into twelve Pieces, and sent to every Tribe a Piece, through the whole Coasts of *Israel*, with an Account of the barbarous and inhospitable Treatment he had met with at *Gibeab*, that so the whole Family of *Israel* in general, being made sensible of the Wrong done him and his Concubine, might join in revenging it.

The Fact indeed was in itself most barbarous; but the revengeful *Levite's* expressing his Resentment in a

(c) *Know him.* Just as the *Sodomites* offered to *Lot*, demanding to have the *Levite* delivered to them, that they might abuse him in that unnatural Way called *Sodomy*.

(d) *Concubine.* She is sometimes called *Wife*, as in *Ch. xix. 1.* but oftener *Concubine*.

Manner so horrid, advanced the Heinousness of the Crime, and made a deeper Impression on the Minds of the *Israelites*, who, upon Sight of each Piece of the divided Concubine, do unanimously agree, That there never was such a Deed done or seen since the Day that the Children of *Israel* came up out of *Egypt*. And to acquit themselves of the Guilt of so wicked a Fact, the whole Congregation of *Israel* met at *Mispeh*, that they might there examine the Business before the Lord; where demanding of the *Levite* an Account of the whole Matter, he thus in short sums it up to them: “I came
 “with my Concubine to *Gibeah*, which belongs to *Ben-*
 “*jamin*, to lodge: But the Men of *Gibeah* beset the
 “House where I was, with a Design to murder me;
 “and my Concubine they have forced, that she is dead;
 “by which they have committed Lewdness and Folly
 “in *Israel*. Whereupon I took my Concubine Home,
 “and having cut her into Pieces, I sent her throughout
 “all the Inheritance of *Israel*. Now ye, being Sons of
 “*Israel*, are concerned in this Abuse as well as I:
 “Therefore consider, and advise what is to be done.”

When the People had received this Account of the Matter, they were highly incensed against the Men of *Gibeah*, and resolved not to return to their Houses till they had brought the Offenders to condign Punishment. And that they might lose no Time, they agreed to draw ten Men out of every Hundred, an Hundred out of every Thousand, and a Thousand out of every ten Thousand, who should be employed to furnish the Army with Provisions and other Necessaries.

But before they proceed to Extremities, they resolve to send Messengers through all the Tribe of *Benjamin*, to lay the Matter before them, and to demand those Men who had committed this Outrage to be delivered to them, that they might do Justice on them. But the People of *Benjamin*, in Contempt of their Brethren the *Israelites*, resolve to stand by the Offenders, and muster up all their Force to defend them. The *Israelitish* Army consisted

consisted of four hundred thousand able Men; that of *Benjamin* but of six and twenty thousand: A great Disparity, and which shewed the latter desperate. The *Israelites* over-confident of their Strength, and despising the *Benjamites*, who were so few, depending on the Justice of their Cause, never went to ask Counsel of God (as in such Emergencies they usually did) whether they should go to War with their Brethren, or no; but taking that for granted, to prevent any Difference that might arise among the Tribes about Precedence in this Expedition, they went up to the House of God only to know which Tribe should lead the Van, and the Lot fell to *Judah*. Upon this, the *Israelitish* Army advanced, and sat down before *Gibeab*; from whence the *Benjamites* made a brisk Sally upon them, cut off two and twenty thousand of them, and retreated to the Town with very little Loss. This unexpected Disaster made the *Israelites* sensible of their Neglect, in not enquiring of the Lord whether they ought to have undertaken this War, or no. Wherefore, bewailing their Misfortune in the last Action, they ask Counsel of the Lord (but in an irregular Manner) who, to punish them for their Presumption, bids them go, but promises them no Success. The heedless *Israelites*, taking this for an Assurance of Victory, drew up their Army again before *Gibeab*, offering the *Benjamites* Battle; who being flush'd with their former Success made another bold Sally, and cut off eighteen thousand more of the *Israelites*. The second Defeat brought the *Israelites* to a Sense of their former Presumption and Neglect: Wherefore, going up to the House of the Lord, they humbled themselves with Weeping and Fasting that Day, and offered Burnt-Offerings and Peace-Offerings before the Lord. And having thus regularly proceeded in their Humiliation, they again enquire of the Lord whether they should attack the *Benjamites*, or forbear: For at this Time the Ark of the Covenant of God was in *Shiloh*, and

(e) *Phineas* was Priest. And now the Lord, having sufficiently corrected the Confidence of the *Israelites*, not only gives them Commission to go against the *Benjamites*, but assures them of Victory.

With this Encouragement the *Israelites* prepare a third Time to attack the *Benjamites*; and to make their Victory the more secure, they lay an Ambuscade in the Meadows behind *Gibeab*, that when the Fight was begun, the *Israelites* by a feigned Flight drawing the *Benjamites* from the City, those that lay in Ambuscade should seize the City, and set it on Fire, as a Signal to the main Body of the *Israelitish* Army to rally and renew the Fight.

Matters being thus disposed, ten thousand choice Troops of the *Israelites* appear before *Gibeab*; which the *Benjamites* seeing, sally out of the Town, and fell briskly upon them, killing about thirty of them. The *Israelites* then retiring, as if they were afraid, pretended to fly; and the *Benjamites*, supposing the Day was their own, eagerly pursued them so far, that they were at a Distance from the Town sufficient to give the Ambuscade an Opportunity to seize the Place, and set it on Fire. The main Body of the *Israelitish* Army seeing this faced about, and charged furiously upon the *Benjamites*, who now began to think of retreating to their City; but when by the Smoak and Flame they saw themselves circumvented, they took to the Wilderness, thinking to secure themselves there: But in vain; for being inclosed by the main Army and the Ambuscade, they were easily trodden down. In this Action and the Pursuit, five and twenty thousand one hundred of the *Benjamites* were slain; and a thousand more having been destroyed in other Actions, there remained but six hundred Men of the *Benjamites*, who fled to the Rock *Rimmon*, and hid themselves there; all the rest of that Tribe, together

(e) *Phineas*. This Passage in *Judges* x. 28. (rejecting that *Robinson's* Dream, that *Phineas* lived three hundred Years) shows plainly, that this Story was transacted early in the Times of the Judges.

with their Towns and Cattle, suffered Military Execution.

The Heat of this Action being over, the *Israelites* began to consider how low a Condition they had reduced the Tribe of *Benjamin* to by this general Slaughter, which afflicted them very much: And the rather, because upon their first engaging in this Quarrel they had rashly sworn that no *Israelite* should give his Daughter in Marriage to a *Benjamite*. Upon this they repair to the Tabernacle where the Ark was, and mourned all Day, saying, “O Lord, why is this come to pass, that there “should this Day be one Tribe wanting in *Israel*?” Then getting up early the next Morning, they built an Altar there, and offered Burnt-Offerings and Peace-Offerings to the Lord. After which, applying themselves to find out some Expedient to elude their rash Oath, and save the sinking Tribe, they recollected, that they had at first bound themselves by Oath to put to Death all those who should not appear with them at *Mizpeh*, and join in the common Cause against the *Benjamites*. Upon Inquiry they found that none came from *Jabesh-Gilead* to the Assembly at the Camp: Therefore sending twelve thousand of their best Men to *Jabesh-Gilead*, they commanded them to put Man, Woman and Child to the Sword, except such marriageable young Women as were Virgins, whom they were to bring with them to the Camp. These Troops having done Execution on *Jabesh-Gilead*, as they were commanded, brought away with them four hundred Virgins to the *Israelites*; who immediately sent Heralds to the Rock *Kimmon* to treat with the few remaining *Benjamites*, offering them Peace, and inviting them to return. The poor *Benjamites* gladly embrace the Offer; and coming to the Camp, the *Israelites* bestowed on them the *Gileadite* Virgins for Wives. But the *Benjamites* being six hundred in Number, there was not for every Man one. Upon which they bethought them of another Expedient to supply this Deficiency: Once a Year there was a solemn Feast held

held at *Shilob*, to which the young Maidens of *Shilob* used to come, and dance there: The *Israelites* therefore directed the *Benjamites* that wanted Wives to lie in wait in the Vineyards at the Time of the Feast, and when they should see the *Shilob* Damsels come to dance, they should seize every Man one for his Wife, and carry them away into their own Country, promising them that if any of the Relations of the Damsels should complain, they would screen them from Danger. The *Benjamites* pursue their Instructions; and watching their Opportunity, took every one his Damself, and carried them off to their own Inheritance: Where, repairing their Cities, they settled again, and in Time recruited their Tribe.

These Civil and Intestine Quarrels among the Tribes being thus reconciled, the *Israelites* did not long enjoy Peace; for continuing to provoke God by their Profaneness and Irregularities, he again chastises them by their Enemies: The most powerful of whom was *Eglon*, King of *Moab*. Him God raised up to be a Scourge, who otherwise had neither Strength nor Courage to attack *Israel*. But being design'd by the Almighty to be the Instrument of his Vengeance, *Eglon* armed the *Ammonites* and *Zimalekites*, and fell upon the *Israelites*, whom he defeated, and possessed himself of the City of Palm-trees. And as an Aggravation of their Offence in so suddenly transgressing after their late Deliverance from Bondage, God enlarged their Punishment; for their Servitude was now advanced from eight Years to eighteen, which was the Space of Time they served *Moab*.

But when the *Israelites* through a Sense of their Misery addressed themselves to their God, he raised them another Deliverer in the Person of *Ehud*, the Son of *Gera*, a left handed Man, by reason of a Lameness in his Right hand. *Ehud* was a wise and politick Man, and having observed the Weakness of the *Israelites* by their eighteen Years Slavery, and the low Condition of the *Benjamites*, that they were not able by open War to attempt any Thing against their Oppressors, he contrives
first

first to take off *Eglon* privately; knowing it would be much easier to deal with the *Moabites* when they should be in Confusion for want of a Leader, than while they had their King at the Head of them. To carry on this the more plausibly, he repairs to the *Moabitish* Court, where, under Pretence of delivering a Present to the King from his Servants the Children of *Israel*, he is admitted into the King's Presence. When he had delivered the Present, and dismissed his Servants that brought it, he returning to the King told him he had a private Message to him. The King bid him be silent till the Company were gone; who being withdrawn, *Ehud* approaches, and tells the King, he had a Message to him from (f) God. At that Word, *Eglon*, in Reverence to the Name of God, arose from his Seat, which *Ehud* taking the Advantage of, stabbed him in the Belly with a Dagger, which he had concealed under his Cloaths, so forcibly, that he thrust the Dagger, Haft and all, into his Belly; and the King being a very fat Man, the Fat of his Belly closed over the Dagger, so that he could not draw it out. *Ehud* seeing him dead left him wallowing in his Blood, and shutting the Door after him made the best of his way Home.

King *Eglon*'s Servants seeing *Ehud* depart, return to pay their usual Attendance on their Master; but finding the Door lock'd, they supposed he had a Mind to retire, and therefore withdrew; but after long waiting, and finding the Door still shut, they took a Key and opened it, and to their great Surprise found their King dead upon the Ground. This long Delay of theirs gave *Ehud* a fair Opportunity to escape; which he improved by his Speed; and coming to Mount *Ephraim*, he blew a Trumpet, at which Signal the *Israelites* flock'd to him, to whom he related what he had done, and bid them follow

(f) God. This was *Ehud*'s Commission from God to dispatch *Eglon*, and therefore is not to be drawn into an Example by others; for in *Judg.* iii. 15. *Ehud* must be supposed to have acted nothing in this but by the Inspiration of God;

for he is in the Text called a Saviour of the Children of *Israel* raised up by God himself. Therefore this Paraphrase may be allowed on these Words, *I have a Message to thee from God, that is, God commands me to slay thee, the Oppressor of Israel.*
him.;

him ; for God (said he) hath delivered your Enemies the *Moabites* into your Hands. They readily obey him as their Leader, and securing the Fords of *Moab* towards *Jordan*, suffer'd not a Man to pass over; but falling courageously upon the *Moabites*, whilst they were in that Consternation for the Death of their King, and Want of a Leader, they slew about ten Thousand of the chief of them, at the same time delivering *Israel*, and subduing *Moab*.

After the Death of *Ebud*, God raised *Israel* another Deliverer, whose Name was *Shangar*, the Son of *Anath*, a strong and valiant Man; who, when the *Philistines* in another Quarter invaded *Israel*, with no better Weapon than an Ox-goad, slew six hundred of the *Philistines*, and deliver'd them from all dangerous Neighbours, that were Borderers on that Side. After which *Israel* enjoyed a Peace of eight Years. In which time of Liberty and Ease, they grew wanton and forgetful of their former Servitude; which Neglect and Ingratitude of theirs provoked God to raise up other Instruments for their Correction; the chief of which was *Jabin*, who assuming to himself the Title of the King of *Canaan* reign'd in *Hazor*. He was a powerful Prince, well stor'd with all warlike Ammunition, having nine hundred (g) Chariots arm'd with Iron, and his Subjects a warlike People. This King lorded it over the oppressed *Israelites* with great Severity for twenty Years; God upon the Repetition and Aggravation of their Transgressions increasing their Punishment. And so cruel were the People to them, that they durst not travel the common Roads upon their ordinary Occasions; but were forced to seek (h) By-ways to avoid their Enemies, so that their Highways were disused: Neither could they in Safety dwell in their Villages, being attack'd by their (i) Archers, if they went but out to draw Water; nay, so servile was their Condition, that they were not suffered to keep any (k) Arms.

(g) *Chariots*. These Chariots were armed with Scythes and Swords, which being driven among the Enemy cut down all near them. *Xenophon*, in his *Cyropædia*, will have *Cyrus* to be the Author of these Chariots; but it is plain from hence,

and from *Josh. xvii. 16.* that they were nine hundred Years before *Cyrus's* Time.

(h) *By-ways*. See *Judg. v. 6.*

(i) *Archers*. *Ibid. v. 11.*

(k) *Arms*. *Ibid. v. 8.*

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The poor *Israelites* languishing thus under the Tyranny and Cruelty of their Enemies, God was pleased at last to remember Mercy; and seeing their Sufferings had brought them to a Sense of their Sins, he found out a Way to deliver them, beyond what they could imagine or expect. For it is very much to be suspected, that at this Time the *Israelites*, by the Severity of their Servitude, were so degenerated and dispirited, that the Sex, which boast itself created for Empire, could not at that Time furnish their present Exigencies with a Man fit to be invested with sovereign Power. For which Reason, in all Probability, *Deborah*, the Wife of *Lapidoth*, is said to have judged *Israel* at that Time. She was a Prophetess, and the *Israelites* used to come to her for Judgment. To this great Prophetess the Lord communicated his Thoughts of delivering his People, and by his Spirit directed her to send for *Barak*, the Son of *Abinoam*, a brave young Prince of the Tribe of *Naphtali*. He came, and she acquainted him, that it was the Pleasure of the Lord, that he should get together ten thousand Men of the Tribes of *Naphtali* and *Zebulun*, and lead them towards Mount *Tabor*; and, to encourage him, she told him in the Name of the Lord, that *Sisera*, General of *Jabin's* Army, with his Army and Chariots, should fall into his Hands. *Barak* considering the Inequality of their Forces, and the Greatness of the Enterprize, and thinking it necessary to have the Prophetess with him, to consult upon all Occasions, as well as to encourage his Men, told her, If she would go with him, he would go; but not else. The undaunted Prophetess consented to accompany him; but pleasantly told him for his Diffidence, that this Expedition should not be for his Honour; for *Sisera* the General should fall into the Hands of a Woman.

Departing together for *Kadesh*, which was *Barak's* Residence, he soon lifted ten thousand Volunteers in *Zebulun* and *Naphtali*, and led them to Mount *Tabor*, the Prophetess still accompanying him. Such a Number of
distress'd

distress'd People being got together, it soon began to be rumour'd about the Country ; and Notice being given to *Sisera* of this Insurrection, he muster'd up all his Force to suppress them, taking with him his nine hundred Chariots of Iron, and down he marches to the River *Kishon*. Which the courageous *Deborah* seeing, being divinely inspired, gave the Signal to the Battle ; saying to *Barak*, “ Up; for this is the Day, in which the Lord “ hath delivered *Sisera* into thine Hand.” *Barak* upon this marched down the Mountain *Taber*, and falls upon *Sisera* in the Valley by the River : Whose Army God struck with such Terror, by driving Storms of Rain and Hail in their Faces, that they could not stand before the *Israelites*; who pursuing them put them all to the Sword, except the General *Sisera*, who, not daring to trust to his Chariot, took to his Heels, and fled on Foot, till he came to the Tent of *Jael*, the Wife of (1) *Heber* the *Kenite*, who dwelt in that Country, which was at Peace with King *Jabin*. *Jael* seeing *Sisera* coming, went out to meet him, and invited him to come in. He, glad of the Opportunity, went in confidently, not suspecting any Danger from her, whose Husband was his Master's Ally.

Being extremely thirsty thro' the Heat and Fatigue of the Day, he intreated *Jael* to give him a little Water to drink; instead of which she gave him as much Milk as he cared for; and having allay'd his Thirst, he directed her, that if any body should come to enquire after him, she should not own he was there. And now thinking himself safe, he laid himself down upon the Floor to sleep, *Jael* very officiously covering him with a Carpet;

(1) *Heber*. He was of the Posterity of *Hobab*, otherwise called *Jethro*, the Father-in-Law of *Moses*, and whose People went up with the Children of *Israel*, to dwell amongst them, *Jdg.* i. 16. This *Heber*, tho' a *Kenite*, had removed his Family from the rest of the *Kenites*, and pitched his Tent in the Plain of *Zaanaim*, not far from *Kedesh*, where *Barak* lived. These *Kenites*, tho' they were Proselytes, and worshipped the true God, according to the *Mosaic Law*, yet being

Strangers by Birth, and not of the promised Seed, and so not pretending a Right or Title to the Land of *Canaan*, they held it best Policy, in those troublesome Times, to observe a Neutrality, and maintain Peace as well as they could, both with the *Israelites* and *Canaanites*. Upon this Foot it was that there was a Peace between K. *Jabin* and the Wife of *Heber* the *Kenite*; and that gave Confidence to *Sisera* in his Distress to fly to *Heber's* Tent for Protection.

where

where he had not lain very long before he fell fast asleep. Which when *Jael* perceiv'd, she took a Hammer and a long Nail or Tent-pin, and pitching it to the Temples of his Head, she struck it with such Force, that it pierc'd through his Head, and pinn'd him to the Ground; after which she (m) cut off his Head, and so left him. Then going to the Door of the Tent, she soon spy'd *Barak* coming in pursuit of *Sisera*; whom she went out to meet, and inviting him in told him, she could shew him the Man he sought for; which she accordingly did. By these Means did God assist the *Israelites* in subduing *Jabin* King of *Canaan*; whom they never left fighting with, till they had quite destroyed him. Upon this Victory the Heroine *Deborah* and her valiant General *Barak* sang this Triumphant Song.

*Let Israel their Avenger's Glory raise
In lofty Notes of everlasting Praise!
Hear, O ye Kings! attentive Princes hear
A Wondrous Song that well deserves your Ear!
When Israel's God from hostile Edom came,
With his own Thunder arm'd, array'd in Flame,
Trembled the Earth, as e'er the Clouds he rode,
The Clouds dissolve to Rain, and own th' incumbent God.
The Mountains Tops at his Approach retire,
Their molten Entrails run in Streams of Fire.
O how unlike those Novel Gods, and vain
Their Hopes that Succour from them entertain?
Weak, unwailing Names! no Help they yield;
War, War the Gates resound, and War the Field!
Th' Alarm is giv'n, in vain are Spear and Shield. }
By their insulting jealous Lords bereft,
No Refuge, but inglorious Flight was left:
When Deborah arose at Heav'n's Command,
When I arose to save the orphan'd Land.
Bless'd be their Names, the gen'rous Few that join'd
To urge the happy Change by Heav'n design'd!*

(m) Cut. See *Judg.* v. 26.

*By Counsel or by Action, Pen or Sword,
To save their Country, and to help the Lord.
But curse ye (n) Meroz; an uncommon Weight
Of Vengeance seize 'em, and a Neuter's Fate!
They would the Spoil, tho' not the Danger share,
Now Sisera is fallen, they'll declare.
His Boasts, his fruitless Hopes, his Fears are o'er;
He bow'd, he fell, he sunk, to rise no more.*

*So let thy Foes, O God! to Dust descend;
But those that love thee brighter Stars attend!
The Sun himself less glorious far than they;
The Sun, when mounted on the blazing Noon of Day.*

To these warlike and tumultuous Transactions, a Time of Tranquillity and Rest succeeded. During which the *Israelites* again provoking God by lapsing into their former Transgressions, he takes them more immediately into his own Hands, and chastises their Presumption and Ingratitude with a severe Famine: Which raging furiously among the *Israelites*, many of them are forced to quit their Habitations, and seek for Food in a foreign Land. Among the rest, one *Elimelech* of *Bethlehem-Judah*, a Man of Condition and Family, removed with his Wife *Naomi*, and his two Sons *Mahlon* and *Chilion*, to the Country of *Moab*, where *Elimelech* soon quits this Life. After whose Death his two Sons, not strictly observing the Law of God, took each of them a Wife of the Women of *Moab*, of base Condition. The Name of *Chilion's* Wife was *Orpah*, and the Name of *Mahlon's*

(n) *Meroz*. What Place this was, is not certainly known, tho' very reasonably by some supposed to be *Merom*, the Variation of one Letter making but little Difference, if other Circumstances do but agree, which they seem pretty much to do here. For about an hundred and twenty Years before, we find, in *Josh. xi. 1, &c.* that *Joshua* at the Waters of *Merom* killed *Jabin*, King of *Hazor*, one of the Predecessors of this *Jabin* (King of the same *Hazor*) whose General, *Sisera*, was slain by *Jael*. Besides, accor-

ding to *Adrichon ex Hieron*, *Merom* was a Lake thirty Furlongs broad, and sixty long, situated between *Cæsarea Philippi*, and the Sea of *Galilee*, the Sea of *Jordan* turning through the Middle of it. This Lake at the Time of the Snow melting on the Mountain *Lebanon* is very full of Water, but at other Times in a great measure dry. Those therefore that inhabited about this Lake are cursed, because they did not only refuse Succours to the *Naphtalites*, but underhand favoured *Sisera*.

Rut. 3.

Ruth. With these they lived about ten Years, when *Chilion* and *Mablon* died both childless. The unhappy *Naomi*, thus deprived of her Husband and Children, and left in a strange Country, could with no Satisfaction stay longer in a Place, where she had lost all the external Comforts of Life; but being informed that the Famine was over in *Israel*, she resolves to return to her own Country; and accordingly set forward for *Judah*, accompanied with her two Daughters-in-law.

Whilst they were on their Journey, *Naomi*, considering it was a Sort of Cruelty to take her Daughters from their Friends and Relations, advised them to go back; and to shew them it was not out of Dislike to their Conversation, but mere Pity, that she was desirous to part with them, she gave them this affectionate Blessing: “The Lord deal kindly with you, as you have done to me and mine; and grant that ye may marry again to your Content, and enjoy a happy Settlement.” Then giving to each a parting Kiss, they in Tears press her to accept of their Company. She endeavours to dissuade them by urging, that if they stay’d in their own Country they might marry again; which they could not propose, if they went with her. At last her Importunity prevailed with *Orpah*, who with Tears taking her Leave of her Mother-in-law, turned back to *Moab*. But no Persuasion could prevail with *Ruth*, who with the most pressing Instances urged *Naomi* to take her along with her; assuring her, that nothing should part them, but that the God she served should be her God. *Naomi* seeing the pious Resolution of her Daughter *Ruth*, press’d her no more to return; but on they both go to *Bethlehem*.

Naomi being arrived at *Bethlehem*, where she and her Family had lived in good Fashion, her Return was generally taken notice of, and her old Neighbours came to congratulate her upon her Arrival in her own Country. It was now the Beginning of Barley-Harvest (which usually was in the first Month with them) when *Naomi* returned to *Bethlehem*: And *Ruth* the *Moabites* being an

industrious Woman, though poor, desired *Naomi* to give her leave to go into the Field to glean some Corn. The Mother consented, and she happened to go into a Field belonging to *Boaz*, a very wealthy Person of the Family of *Elimlech*, and nearly related to him; and there she glean'd after the Reapers. She had not been long there, before *Boaz* himself came into the Field to look after his Workmen; and having saluted them in a very devout manner, he took notice of *Ruth*, and asked his Steward who she was. He told him, she was a *Moabitish* Damsel that accompanied *Naomi* in her Return Home from the Country of *Moab*, and that she had ask'd Leave to glean after the Reapers. *Boaz*, having before been acquainted with her dutiful and affectionate Behaviour to her Mother-in-law, his Kinswoman, encourag'd her to glean in his Ground, and to keep with his Servants, and fare as they did; and charged them not to molest her. *Ruth*, surprized at this unexpected Civility of a Stranger, returned her Thanks in a most profound Respect and Acknowledgment of his Courtesy. *Boaz* told her he had heard of her affectionate Carriage to her Mother-in-law, and that she was come with her into a strange Country, out of a pious Design, to be under the Care and Protection of the God of *Israel*; whom he solemnly prayed to recompense her good Actions, and give her a full Reward. After this he treated her at his own Board very liberally; and when his Servants returned to their Work in the Field, he charged them to be civil to her, and to give her an Opportunity of gleaning the more, by dropping some of the Sheaves. Thus *Ruth* continued gleaning among *Boaz*'s Servants till Barley and Wheat Harvest were over, dwelling still with *Naomi*, to whom she returned every Evening with what she had gleaned, and acquainted her with the great Humanity of *Boaz*. *Naomi*, studious to recompense this tender Affection of her Daughter-in-law, projects how she might engage her Kinsman *Boaz* to marry *Ruth*, whose Civility she might reasonably imagine proceeded from

from some other Motive than that of common Courtesy or Humanity. Therefore acquainting *Ruth* that *Boaz* was her near Kinsman, and informing her what the Law of *Moses* required in that Case, she advised her to wash and anoint, and dress herself, and go to *Boaz's* Barn, where he was winnowing his Barley; but not to let it be known she was there, till he had supped; and was gone to rest; giving her Instructions what she should do farther.

Ruth follows her Mother's Directions, and going to the Barn placed herself so commodiously, that she could unobserved see what passed. When *Boaz* had refreshed himself, he lay down at the end of a Heap of Corn; and *Ruth*, waiting till he was asleep, came softly, and lifting up the Clothes undiscovered laid herself down at his Feet. *Boaz* waking about Midnight, in a Fright ask'd who she was? To which she answered, "I am *Ruth* thy Servant: (o) Spread therefore the Wing of thy Garment over me, for thou art a near Kinsman." *Boaz*, tho' pretty well advanced in Years, was so far from rejecting her, that he commended her Forwardness; and, being a virtuous Man, told her, she had shewn more Piety to her dead Husband, than when he was alive, in raising up (p) Issue to his Name by marrying his Kinsman, and that her Virtue was conspicuous in not following young Men, whether poor or rich. And therefore he assured her, he would not fail to answer her Desire, and his Duty; which he had the greater Inducement to do, because she had the general Reputation of a virtuous Woman. But at the same Time he told her, that though he indeed was a near Kinsman, yet there was

(o) *Spread*. This was as if she had said, *Take me to Wife as the Law directs*: For the Phrase of *spreading the Skirt or Wing* over one, imports a taking such a one into Protection. And because it is the Part of a Husband to protect and defend his Wife from Injuries; therefore to spread the Wing or Skirt over one is used for a *Periphrasis* of Marriage.

(p) *Issue*. *Boaz* took it for a Token of

singular Love to her former Husband, as well as of Devotion to the Religion she was now converted to, that she should chuse to marry her Husband's Kinsman, to keep up her deceased Husband's Name and Family, in Observance of the Law of God; tho' that Kinsman was old in Comparison of her, who was young and beautiful, rather than please herself with some young Man.

another nearer, to whom he must give the Preference, because it was his Right, and that he would communicate the Matter to him next Morning; and if that Kinsman would marry her, he might; otherwise he himself would assuredly marry her.

In the Morning early *Ruth* got up, that she might get off undiscovered, and to avoid Censure of their Reputation and Religion; but that she might not go Home empty-handed to her Mother, *Boaz* gave her six Measures of Barley: With which *Ruth* returned to her Mother, who received her joyfully, both for the Present of *Boaz*, and his kind Treatment of her Daughter; whom she advised to take no Notice to any of what had passed, but patiently to wait the Event; assuring her, that! *Boaz* was a Man of Honour, and would perform his Promise.

Boaz, according to his Promise, appear'd that Morning at the Gate of the City, which was in those Days the usual Place of Judicature. There he met with the Kinsman he had mentioned to *Ruth*; and summoning ten more of the chief of the City, he in their Presence acquainted him, that *Naomi*, who was come back from the Country of *Moab*, had a Parcel of Land to dispose of, which belonged formerly to *Elimelech*, of which he gave him this publick Notice, that he might (q) redeem it, the Right of Redemption belonging in the first Place to him; and therefore he desired to know his Mind in this Matter. The Kinsman readily consented to redeem the Land. But when *Boaz* told him, that at the same Time he must likewise take *Ruth* the *Moabites* to Wife, to raise up the Name of her dead Husband upon his Inheritance, he declined the Business; giving this for a

(q) *Redeem*. The Reason of this seems to be grounded upon the Law, *Deut.* xxv. 6. by which the First born of such a Marriage was to bear the Name of the Woman's former Husband that was dead, to keep up his Name in *Israel*; so that if that Kinsman had married *Ruth*, and should have had but one Son by her, that

Son being not to bear his Name, but the Name of her former Husband, he himself should have had no Son to keep up his Name in *Israel*; and so his Inheritance might have been lost from his Name, by passing into another Name and Family; which he was not willing to hazard.

Reason, That he could not do it on those Terms, without destroying his own Inheritance; and therefore he willingly resigned his Right of Redemption to *Boaz*; who without any Scruple accepts it; and his Kinsman, according to the Custom of those Times, in Token of relinquishing or transferring his Right, takes off his (r) Shoe and delivers it to *Boaz*. Upon which *Boaz* makes this Declaration to the Elders and all the People present; “Ye are my Witnesses this Day, that I have bought all that was *Elimelech’s*, and all that was his Sons, of the Hand of *Naomi*. Ye see likewise I have purchased *Ruth* the *Moabitefs* to be my Wife, to raise up the Name of the Dead upon their Inheritance, that their Name may not be lost among their Relations. Of this I call you to witness this Day.” To all which the Assembly gave their Acknowledgment, adding a hearty Prayer, that she might be fruitful as *Rachel* and *Leah*, who were the original Raisers of the House of *Israel*. *Ruth* soon conceived, and in due Time was delivered of a Son, whom they named *Obed*; which *Obed* was the Father of *Jesse*, and Grandfather of King *David*, of whom, according to the Flesh (s) came the Saviour of the World.

Deborah and *Barak* governed *Israel* with great Care and Prudence; during whose Administration the *Israelites* enjoyed a profound Peace. But when *Deborah*

(r) *Shce*. This was the manner of confirming Bargains, Sales, Exchanges, and Alienations among the *Israelites*. There were two sorts of it: The first was penal; as when a Man refused to marry his Brother’s Wife, to raise up Seed to the Deceased, who died childless; for then the Law commanded, *Deut. xxv. 9.* that the Woman should pluck off his Shoe, and spit in his Face, using these Words; *Thus shall it be done to the Man that refuseth to raise up Issue to his Brother’s Family*. The second was cessionary, or in token of Resignation, and did not reach to compel the Kinsman in the second, third, or fourth Degree to marry the Widow; but he might transfer his

Right to any other of the Kindred; and, as a Sign of his Cession or Translation of his Right, he took off his Shoe and delivered it to his Kinsman, who would marry the Widow, in the Presence of the Elders.

(s) *Came*. Herein is described, how Jesus Christ, who (according to the Flesh) ought to come of *David*, proceeded of *Ruth*, notwithstanding she was a *Moabite* of base Condition, and a Stranger from the People of God: Which is likewise a Type, that the Gentiles should be sanctified by him, and joined with his People, and that there should be one Sheepfold and one Shepherd.

and *Barak* were dead, they fell into their old Apostacy, provoking God by their Idolatry to deliver them into their Enemies Hands: Which he soon did; for he permitted the *Midianites* to over-run their Country, who for seven Years kept them in such Subjection; that they were forced to betake themselves to Dens in the Mountains, and Caves in the Earth, and to fortified Places; from whence in Spring-time they stole out to sow their Land; but towards Harvest the *Amalekites* and *Midianites* came and incamped in their Country, and tarried till they had devoured all the Provision and Forage they could find, and then they returned, leaving the *Israelites* nothing to support Life. The poor *Israelites* being served thus Year after Year, at last grew greatly impoverish'd; which put them in Mind, that by their Sins they had drawn this Punishment upon themselves, and that the only Remedy was to have recourse to the Lord, who had permitted these Evils to befall them. Whilst they were supplicating God for Help, he sent a (t) Prophet to expostulate with them for their Ingratitude, by which he brought them to a Sense of their Folly, and his Justice in punishing them.

The People being by a due Humiliation prepared for Deliverance from the sad Oppression under which they labour'd, God immediately provided an Instrument for this great Work in the Person of *Gideon* the Son of *Joash*. At this Time *Gideon* was threshing Wheat, that he might hide it from the *Midianites*: And whilst he was thus employed in providing Sustenance for his Family, the Angel of the Lord appeared to him, and said, "The Lord be with thee, thou mighty Man of Valour." *Gideon* was soon apprized, by the Manner of this Salutation, that it was a Message extraordinary, and readily replied thus: "If the Lord be with us, why then

(t) *Prophet*. Of this Prophet's Name we have no farther Account, than that he was a Prophet. St. *Augustine* supposes him to be that Angel which soon after appeared to *Gideon*; but others ge-

nerally suppose him to be some Person endued with the Spirit of Prophecy by God, and sent to the *Israelites*, as other Prophets were.

JUDGES CHAP. VI.
An angel talks with Gideon.

48



JUDGES 6 Verse 21.

*Then the angel of the LORD put forth
the end of the staff that was in his hand;
and touched the flesh & it unleavened cakes:*

310.

“ is all this befallen us ? And where are all his Miracles, which our Forefathers have told us of, faying, “ Did not the Lord bring us up out of *Egypt* ? But “ now the Lord hath forfaken us, and delivered us in- “ to the Hands of the *Midianites*.” The Angel looking on him ftedfaftly, faid, “ Be courageous, and thou “ fhalt fave *Israel* from the Hand of the *Midianites* : Is “ it not I that fend thee ?” But *Gideon*, confidering his own Weaknefs, and the low Condition of his Family, more than the Prefence of him that fpoke to him, answer’d, “ In what Capacity am I to fave *Israel*, fince “ my Family is but poor in the Tribe of *Manaffeh*, “ and myfelf the leaft among them ?” The Angel to encourage him faid, “ Surely I will be with thee, “ and thou fhalt fmite the *Midianites* with as much “ Eafe as if they were but one Man.”

Gideon upon this began to entertain fome Hopes; but defiring to know who it was talk’d with him, he faid ; “ If now I have found Favour in thy Sight, be pleafed “ to fhew me fome Token, whereby I may know that “ it is Thou the Lord that talkeft with me : Wherefore “ depart not hence, I pray thee, till I return with my “ Offering, and fet it before thee.” The Angel promifed to tarry ; and *Gideon* having prepared a Kid, and fome unleaven’d Cakes, he came and prefented them before the Angel : By whose Direction having laid them upon the Rock, the Angel with the End of his Staff touch’d the Cakes and the Flefh; upon which Fire came out of the Rock and confumed them; and the Angel inftantly difappeared. *Gideon* upon this was fenfible that it was an Angel that had appeared to him, and crying out in Defpair, faid, “ Alas, my Lord God ! becaufe “ I have feen an Angel Face to Face, I fhall die.” But the Angel, tho’ *Gideon* could not now fee him, to confirm and comfort him, bid him not fear, for he fhould not die. *Gideon*, in thankful Remembrance of this gracious Interview, and God’s Goodnefs to him, built an Altar there, and called it *Jehovah-Shalom*, that is, the Lord of Peace.

The same Night the Lord commanded *Gideon* to demolish the Altar of *Baal*, which in those corrupt Times had been erected, and to cut down the Groves there, and build an Altar to the Lord his God upon the Top of the Rock ; after which, to sacrifice his Father's (u) second Bullock upon it, which was seven Years old, and offer it for a Burnt-Sacrifice, with the Wood of the Grove which he was to cut down. *Gideon* readily obeys God ; but considering that it would be difficult to do this in the Day-time, he resolves to do it by Night ; and taking ten of his Servants to assist him, he did as God had commanded him. The Inhabitants of the Place being informed what *Gideon* had done, demanded him of his Father, that they might put him to Death : But *Joash* would not deliver his Son, resolutely saying, “ It *Baal* is God, let him avenge himself “ on him that destroy'd his Altar.” From which Occasion *Joash* called his Son *Gideon Jerub-Baal* ; which signifies, Let *Baal* avenge. Thus this Tumult ended.

It was now about the Time when the *Midianites* and *Analekites*, with other Eastern People, used to come and plunder the Country, who appearing in a vast Body incamped in the Valley of *Jezreel*. Upon which *Gideon*, inspired with a more than ordinary Courage, by Sound of Trumpet summoned all those of his own Family to come in quickly to him. Then sending Messengers thro' the Tribes of *Manasseh*, *Asher*, *Zebulun*, and *Naphtali*, they came in such Numbers, that in a short Time he could muster up an Army of two and thirty thousand Men ; which were but few in Comparison of the Enemies Army, which consisted of an Hundred thirty-five thousand Men. *Gideon*, considering the vast Odds the Enemy had, beg'd of God to give him some Omen for an Assurance of Success to him and his Men. The

(u) *Second*. This Bullock is thought by the Rabbins and others to be called the second from the Stall in which it stood and was fed, which was the second in Order of Place ; and being as many Years old, as their Subjection

to *Midian* was, the destroying this Bullock might, in some Measure, prefigure the breaking off the *Midianish* Yoke from the Neck of *Israel* by *Gideon* ; whose Name signifies a *Breaker* or *Destroyer*.

JUDGES CHAP. VI.

Gideons two signs.

49



JUDGES 6. Verse 37.

*Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in y^e floor;
S if y^e dew be on y^e fleece only, and it be dry upon
all y^e earth beside, then shall I know that etc.*

312.

Sign he proposed was, That he laying a Fleece of Wool on the Floor, the Dew should be upon the Fleece only, and the Earth round about it should be dry. Which the next Morning was done ; for the Ground about it was dry, but the Fleece so full of Dew, that he wrung a Bowl-ful of Water out of it. Then (*w*) inverting the former Manner, he desired that the Fleece might be dry, and the Ground dewy ; which was likewise done. *Gideon*, being fully convinced by this double Miracle, resolves forthwith to attack the Enemy. But God, knowing the Folly and Ingratitude of the *Israelites*, and rightly foreseeing, that if with this Army they should conquer the *Midianites*, they would vainly impute it to their own Courage and Numbers, and not to his Assistance ; therefore ordered *Gideon* to make Proclamation in the Camp, that whosoever was afraid should have Liberty to return home. Upon which two and twenty thousand quitted this Expedition, only ten thousand remaining with *Gideon*. This was a very inconsiderable Number in Comparison of the numerous Host of the *Midianites* : But yet, as few as the *Israelites* were, it came within the Verge of Possibility, that they might defeat their Foes with this Handful of Men : And therefore God, thinking them too many, and resolving that the whole Action and Victory should appear to be his doing, order'd *Gideon* to bring his Soldiers down to the Water, where he would give him a Sign to direct him what Men to select for this Business ; which was this : They, that took up Water in their Hands and lapped it, should go with him ; but they, who lay down to drink, should not go. Only three hundred of them drank out of their Hands ; whom God commanded him to keep with him, and dismiss the rest. But lest *Gideon*, upon God's reducing his Army to so small a Number as three hundred Men, should grow diffident of the pro-

(*w*) *Inverting*. It may reasonably be supposed, that *Gideon* for his own Satisfaction would not have been thus impertinent to require a Repetition of the Sign ;

but that he rather did it to encourage his Men, and to take off all Suspicion of Art or Contrivance.

mis'd Success, God bids him take his Servant *Phura*, and late at Night go to the Enemies Camp and listen; where he should hear that which would encourage him. Which he accordingly did; and there he heard a Soldier expounding a Dream to another, which was so in Favour of the *Israelites*, that he heard his own Name mention'd, with this Advantage, that God delivered the *Midianitish* Army into the Hand of *Gideon*.

Gideon having heard this, in humble Gratitude bows himself to God; and getting back undiscovered put his Men in order, dividing them into three Companies, an hundred in each; he gave to every Man a Trumpet and a Pitcher with a burning Lamp in it, charging them to observe his Motions, and do just as they should see him do. *Gideon* having thus disposed this little Body of Men, put himself at the Head of one of them, and giving the Signal by breaking the Pitchers and founding their Trumpets, the rest did the like, and with a terrible Shout they cried out, *The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon!* This Alarm affected their Eyes and Ears with unusual Objects, and increased by the Horror of the (x) Night, so added to their Confusion, that mistaking their own Party, they fell on each other's Sword; God having before disposed the *Midianites* for Destruction, so that *Gideon* and his Army gain'd an easy Victory, having nothing to do but to pursue a flying timorous Enemy. In which they were assisted by those that upon Proclamation had deserted the common Cause; who, tho' they were afraid to fight, yet had Courage to pursue. *Gideon*, to make sure Work, and to prevent the *Midianites* for some Ages to give *Israel* any Disturbance,

(x) *Night*. It is said, *Judg.* vii. 19. That this Action began at the beginning of the middle Watch; which dividing the Night from Six to Six into four Watches, as most do, should answer to Ten at Night with us. But that seems too early, considering how much Time must be spent, after *Gideon* had ordered to set forward, in his going to the *Midianitish* Camp, staying there to hear the Dream and the

Interpretation of it, returning back again, disposing his Men, and giving the necessary Orders for the Assault. *Drusius* on this Place, dividing the Night into three Watches only, supposes this to be called the middle Watch, as being the middlemost of the three. Such a Division running the middle Watch an Hour farther, makes the beginning of it answer to our Eleven at Night.

sends to the *Ephraimites* to possess themselves of the Passes on the *Jordan*, that so, few or none of them might escape. Which they accordingly perform'd, taking *Oreb* and *Zeeb*, two *Midianitish* Princes, whom they slew, and then followed the Pursuit; which *Gideon* and his Party continued very closely till they came to *Succoth*, where being faint and weary they halted, and *Gideon* desired of the Inhabitants some Refreshment for his Men. The Princes of *Succoth*, knowing that *Gideon* with his small Party was in chase of *Zebah* and *Zalmunna*, two of the Kings of *Midian*, who with fifteen thousand Men were fled to *Karcor*, instead of giving *Gideon* and his Soldiers any Refreshment, ridicul'd him on the Account of his little Army, and in Derision ask'd him, whether he was so secure of Victory over the Princes he pursu'd, as to demand Relief of them? This unmannerly and inhospitable Treatment so incens'd *Gideon*, that he told them, If the Lord gave him Success against *Zeba* and *Zalmunna*, he would make them repent their Incivility. The same he threatned to the Inhabitants of *Penuel*, for the like Rudeness; and with his fatigued Party continued the Pursuit till he came to *Karcor*, where the two *Midianitish* Princes with their rallied Forces lay thoughtless of Danger. But *Gideon* taking the Advantage of this their Security, surpriz'd and defeated them, taking the two Kings Prisoners, whom he brought in Triumph with him to *Succoth*: And called the Chiefs of the Place, Seventy-seven in Number, who had before upbraided him, to a severe Account, chastising them with Thorns and Briars, as he had before threatned them. Nor was he less sparing to *Penuel*, whose Fortifications he demolished, and slew the Governors.

The two captive Kings, *Zeba* and *Zalmunna*, had in their March laid all waste before them, and put many to the Sword; amongst whom *Gideon's* Family shar'd the common Fate of the distressed at *Tabor*; and *Gideon*, intending to shew Mercy to the two Kings, if they had shewed any to his House, demanded, what Manner of
Men

Men they were whom they had slain at *Tabor*; who answered somewhat flatteringly, that they were like him, having the majestick Appearance of Royal Children. *Gideon*, from their Answer concluding they were his Brethren, whom they had slain, declared, if they had spared them, he would have saved their Lives; but since they had killed his Brethren, they must expect no Mercy. Then commanding his Son *Jether* to fall upon them, he being but a Youth, and somewhat timorous, *Gideon* dispatched them with his own Hand; ordering them to be strip'd of their Royal Ornaments, and their Camels of their rich Trappings and Furniture.

The *Ephraimites*, who had slain *Oreb* and *Zeeb*, brought their Heads to *Gideon*, to let him see what Service they had done; and beginning to quarrel with *Gideon* for not calling upon them at the first, he wisely pacified them by magnifying their Service and Success in the Pursuit. And now the Strength of *Midian* being thus broke by the Slaughter of their whole Army, *Israel* enjoyed a Peace of forty Years.

The *Israelites*, fond of *Gideon*'s Courage and Conduct in this great Deliverance, resolve to crown his Merit with the Settlement of the Government on him and his Family. But *Gideon*, well knowing the Honour of this Victory was not due to him, but God, modestly and generously declined their Offer, saying, "I will not
" rule over you, neither shall my Son, but the Lord
" shall rule over you: Yet to let you see I do not slight
" your Kindness, I will request one Thing of you; and
" that is, that you will give me the Ear-rings of your
" Plunder." To this they all readily consented; and spreading a Garment on the Ground, they threw in the Ear-rings, which by Weight amounted to one thousand seven hundred (y) Shekels of Gold; besides the rich Ornaments and Robes of the Kings, with the Chains that

(y) *Shekels*. If the Shekel of Gold was in value fifteen Shillings of *English Money*, as *Codexyn* computes it; these one thousand seven hundred Shekels would amount to one thousand two hundred seventy and five Pounds,

were upon the Camels Necks. Of this Gold *Gideon* made an (2) Ephod, and plac'd it in his own City *Ophrah*, where he dwelt, as a Monument of this Victory. Which in Time, by a wrong Use, and contrary to the Will of *Gideon*, prov'd a Snare to his Family, and indeed to the whole House of *Israel*.

After this Victory *Gideon* lived forty Years, he and all *Israel* enjoying a profound Tranquillity, But no sooner was he dead, than *Israel* fell into their old Sins of Idolatry and Ingratitude, not only to God, but to the Memory of *Gideon* their Deliverer. *Gideon* by several Wives had seventy Sons; and by a Concubine he had one Son, whom he named *Abimelech*. And tho' *Gideon* had refused the Government of *Israel*, both for himself and his Sons, yet as soon as he was dead, his Son *Abimelech*, an aspiring Youth, suggesting to his Mother's Family at *Shechem*, that his seventy Brethren would usurp the Government over them, advised them to consider, whether it would not be better for them to be govern'd by one, than by seventy Persons, at the same Time putting them in Mind, that he was of their Family and Kindred. His Relations upon this Suggestion proposed Advancement to themselves, which they insinuated to the *Shechemites*; who closing with the Project, contrive how to advance *Abimelech* to the Go-

(2) *Ephod*. The Ephod was the upper Garment which the Priest wore upon his Shoulders. *Gideon's* Design in making this Ephod is variously questioned by Commentators. Some will have it, that he made an Idol, and that from *Judges* viii. 27. *Israel went a whoring after it, which was the Ruin of Gideon and his Family*. But this Inference is taken wrong; for who can suppose, that a Man familiar with God, and chosen by him, as *Gideon* was, after so signal a Victory, as he by God's immediate Assistance and Direction had gain'd, should turn Idolater? Others think that *Gideon* made of this Gold a Military Garment, as a Monument of this Victory, which the *Israelites* after turn'd into an Idol. But *St. Augustin*, with some more, seem to take it right, and by the Ephod understand sacerdotal Ornament:

in general, and other necessary Utensils belonging to the Priestly Office; which the *Israelites*, after *Gideon's* Death, perverted to idolatrous Uses. For the Text says, during *Gideon's* Life, which lasted forty Years after this Victory, the *Israelites* lived peaceably forty Years; and that *Gideon* died in a good Age; which we cannot suppose, if he had been an Idolater; nor can it be inferred from hence, that his House was ruined in his time, for he left seventy Sons behind him; so that this Ruin betel his Family in the general Ruin of *Israel*, when they fell into intestine Feuds and Idolatry. So that we may justly conclude, that *Gideon* made this Ephod with no other Intention, but that it might be a lasting Monument of the Victory obtained by *Israel* over *Midian*.

vernment:

vernment; and that Money might not be wanting to forward the Design, they took some out of the Treasury of their God *Baal-berith*, and gave it to *Abimelech*, who with it hired a Company of dissolute Fellows to attend him. With these Ruffians he repaired to his deceased Father's House at *Opbrab*, where he seiz'd sixty nine of his Brethren, and slew them upon one (a) Stone; the youngest, named *Jotham*, having timely Notice, escaping. Soon after this bloody and unnatural Execution, the *Shechemites* having nothing to fear from *Gideon's* House, assembled together at *Millo*, and chose *Abimelech* (b) King.

When young *Jotham* heard this, he went to the Top of Mount *Gerizim*, where in a (c) Parabolical Oration he represented to the *Shechemites*, how his Father *Jerub-Baal* (*Gideon*) had refused to have the Government of *Israel* settled upon him and his Family; and that they had now disposed of it to one, as much inferior in Virtue and Honour to *Gideon* and his lawful Sons, as the Bramble is to the Olive, Fig-Tree or Vine; he expostulated the Injury done to his Family, and reproach'd them with their Ingratitude: “If you
 “ have done truly and sincerely in making *Abimelech*
 “ King; and if you have dealt well with *Jerub-Baal*
 “ and his House, who merited so well of you: (For
 “ my Father fought for you, and delivered you from
 “ the Oppression of *Midien*, and yet you have risen up
 “ against my Father's House this Day, and have slain
 “ his Sons, and made *Abimelech*, the Son of his Concubine, King, because he is your Brother :) If you
 “ have done well in this, then rejoice in *Abimelech*,

(a) *Stone*. Some will have this Stone to be an Altar, dedicated by *Abimelech* to the Idol *Baal*, and erected in the same Place, where his Father *Gideon* had before destroyed the Altar of *Baal*, to recompense the Disgrace done by him to the Idol.

(b) *King*. In this Choice there were neither the Call of God, nor the Consent of

the People; (who seldom, except in a tumultuous manner, had any thing to do with things of this nature) for *Abimelech* was not appointed King by the Body of the *Israelites*, but by a few disorderly seditious *Shechemites*, without the Knowledge of *Judab* or the other Tribes; and reigned only in *Shechem*.

(c) *Parabolical*, See *Judg.* ix. 1.

“ and

“ and let him rejoice in you. But if not, let (d) Fire
 “ come out from *Abimelech*, and devour the Men of
 “ *Shechem*, and the House of *Millo*, and let them de-
 “ vour him.” *Jotham* having thus delivered himself
 to the *Shechemites* made his Escape to *Beer*, where he
 lived secure from *Abimelech*’s Rage. And within three
 Years afterwards his Curse was verified both upon *Abi-
 melech* and the *Shechemites*; for they conspired against
Abimelech, attempting to seize or kill him. But being
 disappointed of their Purpose, they joined another
 profligate Wretch, and his Company, one that lived
 by the Spoil of others, as the *Shechemites* did. His
 Name was *Gaal*, the Son of *Ebed*, an impudent Boast-
 er, but a very Coward.

Gaal being set at the Head of this dissolute Gang,
 ravaged the Country uncontroll’d for some Time, spoil-
 ing the Vineyards of the *Shechemites* who made *Abime-
 lech* King; and in their Mirth and Jollity they despised
Abimelech; but none spoke with more Contempt of him
 than *Gaal*. The wild Carriage of this foolish Fellow
 soon reached the Ear of *Zebul*, who was *Abimelech*’s
 Vice-Roy in *Shechem*; but he not being strong enough
 to chastise him for his Insolence, sends privately to *Abi-
 melech*, to acquaint him that *Gaal* and his mad Crew were
 come to *Shechem*, and had fortified the City against
 him, advising him to come by Night, and lie in Am-
 buscade till the next Morning, that so he might sur-
 prize them. *Abimelech* approves of the Stratagem,
 and forthwith put it in Execution; which succeeded
 so well, that *Gaal*, and those that followed him were
 defeated and slain; and the next Day he stormed the
 Place and took it; and to express his Resentment more
 furiously, after he had demolished the City, he sowed
 it with (e) Salt. But during these Transactions, some
 that

(d) Fire. That is, let *Abimelech* be
 a Scourge to the *Shechemites*, and they
 to him, in Expiation of their Injustice
 and Ingratitude to the House of *Gideon*.

(e) Salt. This was an old Custom of
 punishing Cities for Treachery. Not that
 the Strowing of Salt signified drying
 up, or rendering of the Soil barren;
 (for

that escaped the Fury of the Conqueror's Sword, and had fled to the Tower, seeing the Houses of the City thrown down, not supposing themselves safe in the Tower, took Sanctuary in a Fort belonging to the Temple of their God *Berith*: Which *Abimelech* hearing, he takes an Ax in his Hand, and commanding his Army to do the same, he marches up to mount *Malmon*; where grew a Grove of Trees, and cutting down a Bough, he laid it on his Shoulder and brought it to the Fort. The rest did the same; and when they had laid the Boughs together, *Abimelech* set them on Fire; by which about a thousand Men and Women were destroyed.

This Success encouraged *Abimelech* to attack the City of *Thebez*, which he took by Storm: But there being a strong Tower in the City, the Inhabitants fled thither, and maintained it for some Time against all the Force of *Abimelech*; which so irritated the impatient Conqueror, that pursuing his Fate, he came near the Tower to encourage his Men, and facilitate the taking it by his Presence; but pressing too near the Door, with a Design to have set it on Fire, a Woman from above cast down a Piece of a Millstone upon his Head, which broke his Skull. *Abimelech* finding himself mortally wounded, called hastily to his Armour-bearer, and commanded him to dispatch him, that it might not be said he died by the Hand of a Woman. His Servant obeys him, and the Report of his Death is no sooner rumoured among the Troops, but they dispersed: Thus were *Abimelech* and the *Shechemites* scourges to each other, and *Jotham's* Curse compleated in the Fate of both.

Tola the Son of *Phua*, Uncle by the Father's Side to *Abimelech*, of the Tribe of *Issachar*, was appoint-

for there was no Occasion for that in an inhabited Town) but to shew the Detestation of their Rebellion, and that hereafter none should rebuild or re-people it. In this Action Part of *Jotham's* Curse

was accomplished; for *Abimelech*, tho' not a lawful King, yet served the *Shechemites* justly, who after they had made him their King, revolted from him.

ed Ruler or Judge of *Israel* in his Stead. Of whom nothing is recorded; but that he governed *Israel* three and twenty Years. To him succeeded *Jair* of *Gilead*; who reigned two and twenty Years. After which, God being provoked by the Idolatry of the *Israelites*, he permitted the *Philistines*, *Ammorites* and *Ammonites* to over-run their Country as they pleased for eighteen Years: And in the last Year the *Ammonites* bent their whole Force against the Tribes of *Judah*, *Benjamin*, and *Ephraim*. The *Israelites*, finding themselves not able to deal with the vast Numbers of their Enemies, become sensible of their Follies; by which they had provoked God to punish them thus; and therefore acknowledging their Sin of Idolatry; they beg of God to assist them this one Time. God upbraids them with their Ingratitude, and to increase the Pungency of their Sorrow bids them to cry to the Gods which they had chosen, and try if they can deliver them in the Time of their Distress. This was a cutting Reproof to the *Israelites*. However, to recover God's Favour and Protection they reform'd; for they put away their Idols, and served the Lord. This Method carried some Weight with it, and God's Mercy return'd as fast as their Repentance; appointing them Means to effect their Deliverance. There was at that Time in the half Tribe of *Manasseh*; which settled on the other Side of *Jordan*; a Man of Note amongst his People, whose Name was *Gilead*, of the Family of that *Gilead* the Son of *Machir*; to whom *Moses* gave the City (f) *Gilead*, from whence the Family were called *Gileadites*. This *Gilead* had several Sons by his Wife; and he had one Son by a (g) Concubine, whom he named *Jephthah*. When *Gilead's*

(f) *Gilead*. See *Numb.* xxvii. 4.

(g) *Concubine*. *Jephthah* was undoubtedly a Bastard, and consequently could claim no Right of Inheritance or Share of his Father's Fortune or Estate by the old Law, *Deut.* xxiii. 2. Nor were Bastards allowed to be Priests in those Days, as likewise now-a-days, by reason of the Infamy of the Parents, and their own

corrupt Morals, too often proceeding from the Neglect in their Education. From hence some may be apt to call in Question God's Dispensation, in making *Jephthah* so great an Instrument of his Glory. To which I answer: 1. God hath prescribed Laws to Men; but none to himself; and can alter his Dispensation according to the Circumstances and

leah's lawful Sons were grown up, they thrust out *Jephthah*, telling him, that being not born in lawful Matrimony, he should have no Inheritance among them. *Jephthah* upon this, expecting worse Usage, hasten'd from them, and took up his Station in the Land of *Tob*; which Place being very subject to the Depredations and military Expeditions of the Enemy, *Jephthah* the rather chose for his Residence, being himself naturally brave and forward upon Occasion. In their Excursions against the Enemy he always distinguish'd himself, so that at last he was courted to accept a Command of a Parcel of young Fellows, with whom he went a foraging.

In this Time of frequent skirmishing, the *Gileadites* being hardly pressed by the *Ammonites*, resolv'd upon a War, but wanted a General. Wherefore at a general Meeting of their Chiefs it was agreed on, that he that should first attack the *Ammonites* should be their General. Then bethinking themselves of *Jephthah*, whom they knew to be a Man of Courage and Conduct, they addressed themselves to him, and offered him the Command of their Army. *Jephthah* surprized at this sudden Change, asked them what they meant, who had expelled him his Father's House; and could they expect any Succour from him in their Distress? They acknowledg'd their present Distress was the only Motive of their coming, and repeated their Instances to him to go with them.

Jephthah, considering the Case and Temper of the People, who had once used him ill, and probably might do so again, was resolv'd to be upon sure Terms with them: "If I go along with you (says he) and succeed
" against the *Ammonites*, shall I be your Ruler after-
" wards?" Their Necessity was so pressing at this

Conditions of Men without Violation in a human Sense. 2. He dispensed with the Law in this Case, to shew that those that are basely born ought not to despond, but by a virtuous and good Life

expect a Share of God's Blessings, they being excluded from the Benefit of the Law, not by their own, but by their Parents Fault.

Time,

Time, that they readily consented, solemnly engaging that he should. Upon this, *Jephthah* went with them, and the People made him Captain over them; *Jephthah* repeated the Covenant or Agreement between them and him, before the Lord in *Mizpeh*.

Jephthah, having the Security he proposed for the Establishment of the Government upon himself, sends Ambassadors to the King of *Ammon* to demand the Reason of his invading the *Israelites*. To which the *Ammonitish* King reply'd, that the Land was his, and that the *Israelites* upon their coming out of *Egypt* took it from the *Ammonites*; which now he demanded, or would make them restore it. *Jephthah* by other Ambassadors tells him the Case from the Beginning: That the *Israelites* in their Passage from *Egypt* being denied to pass thro' the Countries of *Edom* and *Moab*, were forced to fetch a great Compass till they came to the Land of the *Amorites*; where they were not only refused a Passage, but attack'd in a hostile manner by the *Amoritish* King, whom the *Israelites* defeated in a pitch'd Battle, fairly conquering not only the Kingdom of the *Amorites*, but whatsoever else belonged to *Sibon* the *Amoritish* King: Who having before taken from the King of *Moab* the Land now in (g) Dispute, it fell with the rest by Conquest from the *Amorite* to *Israel*; besides, he confirm'd *Israel's* Title by a long Prescription of three hundred Years peaceable Enjoyment. But these Reasons would not do with the King of *Ammon*, who marched directly against the *Israelites*, and was by them as warmly received. But before the Action began, *Jephthah*, the more readily to secure himself of Victory, made this Vow to the Lord: "If (says he) thou wilt give me Success against the *Ammonites* this Day, whatsoever cometh forth of mine House to meet me, when I return, I will surely consecrate to the Lord, (h) or I will offer it up for a Burnt-offering.

Y 2

To

(g) Dispute. See *Numb.* xxi. 26. Vow, and the Execution of it, as most
(h) Or. No body can read *Jephthah's* Translations express and represent it, without

To this Victory of *Jephthab's* a Civil War succeeded, between the Tribe of *Ephraim* and the Tribe of *Gilead*.

The

without Horror and Amazement. To find a Man, and that not a wild *Barbarian*, but an *Israelite*, offering in a *Burnt-Offering* a young, innocent, and, no Doubt, beautiful and virtuous Maid; to find an indulgent, fond Father burning the Fruit of his own Body, his own Child, nay and his dutiful and obedient Child too; the Object of his Hopes and present Comforts; to find him, whom the Apostle lists in the Catalogue of the most pious and faithful Worthies of the Old Testament, vowing to offer a human Sacrifice to God, at the very Time in which the Scripture says, the Spirit of the Lord was upon him; and putting his Vow afterwards in Execution, tho' human Sacrifices were hateful to the Lord, provoked him utterly to destroy the *Canaanites*, and kindled his Indignation against the *Israelites*, when they brought the King of *Moab* to the sad Necessity of offering his eldest Son for a *Burnt-Offering upon the Wall of his City*, 2 Kings iii. 27. I say, to find all this, is very puzzling and unaccountable. But it is very strange, that Translators should have rendered several Passages of this Vow in favour of such a cruel and barbarous Sense; especially ours, who knew that the Words could very well admit of a very different and reasonable Meaning, as may be seen in the Notes they have set down in the Margin of the 31st and 40th Verses of that Chapter. Nobody can deny, but that the Word which is rendered *and*, signifies *or*, in a great many Places of Scripture: Tho' some there are who say, that the Propriety of Speech will not admit of translating *or* for *and* in this Place. But surely they would not think so, if they had considered that the Words, *shall be the Lord's*, should be more properly rendered, *shall be consecrated to the Lord*; that is, dedicated and set apart for God's special Service, as the *Nazarenes* were. And that it is in such a Case as this, that *Jephthab* is said to have done according to his Vow, is clear, because it is immediately subjoined, *And she knew no Man*; for if she was sacrificed just as she came down from the Mount, this Expression is altogether superfluous, because it is plain enough from her bewailing her Virginity for two

Months, that she had known no Man before; and it is very certain she could know no Man after. So that it is very natural to understand the Words thus; That *Jephthab* according to his Vow had set apart his Daughter for God's special Service, and that she continued unmarried; which will more fully appear, if we consider, that the Words, which are rendered *to lament* in the following Verse, signify also to talk with. But against this it is said, that Parents had no Power to oblige their Children to a single Life. To which I answer, 1. That the Objection militates more against the other Opinion. For if the want of a Right to do a Thing be an Argument that *that* Thing is not done, then the more Degrees of Injustice and Unlawfulness there are in any Thing, the more boldly we may conclude, that it has not been done. So that if it follows, that if *Jephthab* did not oblige his Daughter to perpetual Virginity, because he had no just Power to do so, then it is most evident that he did not sacrifice her, because such an Action was impious and barbarous, and contrary to the Laws of God, of Nature, and Humanity. 2. *Jephthab's* not having a Right to oblige his Daughter to perpetual Virginity, only proves that he should not have done it, and not that he did it not. For he might have thought he had a Right, or out of blind Zeal fancied himself obliged to perform his inconsiderate and unlawful Vow; and it is much more reasonable to suppose this, than to imagine him to have been so grossly ignorant, as not to have known the Barbarity and Impiety of human Sacrifices; or so very stupidly zealous, as to have performed so abominable an Action, if he could have been capable of vowing it. But then, 3. It cannot be proved, that Fathers had not such a Right under the Law. It's plain they had a Power to dedicate their Children to God's peculiar Service, and to oblige them to several Things, somewhat uneasy to Flesh and Blood. It's likewise plain, that Fathers were to determine what was reasonable for their Children, while under their Care, to vow and promise; because the Vows made by such Children signified nothing without the Father's Consent,

The Ephraimites were an ambitious quarrelsome People,
and

Consent; but that if the Father did allow them, *Every Vow and Bond which they bound their Soul, was to stand*, Numh. xxx. 4, 5. From which it appears, that Parents might advise their Chil'ren to reasonable Vows, and, with their Consent, bind them to any Thing that was not unlawful, and that if the Father did vow any Thing in the Name of his Child, which the Child did not agree to, that then the Father was forgiven; as the Children were when their Vows were disallowed by their Father; which is sufficient to answer this Objection.

But it is farther said, that if this had been all that *Jephthah* had vow'd, he had not been so much troubled as he was, when at his Return in Triumph his Daughter met him; for it is said, *He rent his Cloaths, and said, alas, my Daughter, thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me.* But they that think so, seem to be Strangers to the Old Testament Notions, and to human Nature. It appears from several Places of the Old Testament, that the being without Children, and consequently perpetual Virginity, was look'd upon as a Curse and a Reproach; and how desirous Men are to see their Posterity increase, is very evident. So that it is no Way strange to find *Jephthah* troubled, and rending his Cloaths, when his only Child was to live and die under this Reproach; when he saw his Family extinct, and himself excluded from all Hopes of Posterity, and particularly from the Hopes of having the *Messiah* to come of his Seed; which was the general Hope and Desire of all the *Israelitish* Women.

But besides what hath been urged against *Jephthah's* sacrificing his Daughter, from what we have before-mentioned of the translating the *or* instead of *and*, we may very fairly suppose, that by this Vow, *Jephthah* had regard to the Fitness of the Subject, or Thing vowed for a Burnt-Offering. So that if what came forth to meet him were not fit for a Sacrifice, then it should be offered for a Burnt-Offering. Now the Things, that were not fit for Sacrifice, were Mankind and unclean Beasts and Birds. But tho' these might not be offered in Sacrifice, yet they might be vowed, and afterwards

be redeemed with Money, at the Valuation of the Priest, or not redeemed, at the Vower's Choice; and if not redeemed, might be sold, as appears by the Law, *Levit. xviii. 21.*

It hath been objected, that *Josephus*, *Philo*, and many of the Fathers, are for the common Notion of *Jephthah's* sacrificing his Daughter. I have as great a Veneration for the Ancients as any; but we are to follow no body blindly. It is very probable, that the Fathers believed so on the Testimony of these two *Jews*; and so should I too, if they had any certain Tradition to build their Assertion on. But since they want this, it is to be looked upon as their private Opinion, for which we are to have no greater Value, than the Reasons, which they give for it, do deserve. The Fathers were too much wedded to the Fictions and Fancies of the *Jews*, and especially of *Josephus* and *Philo*; which often betrayed them into the Belief of several ridiculous Whims, and particularly of that senseless Opinion of the Angels begetting Giants on the Women that were before the Deluge; which they took to be the Meaning of these Words in *Genesis*, *That the Sons of God went in unto the Daughters of Men.*

In *Judg. xi. 40.* we read, That the Daughters of *Israel* went yearly to lament *Jephthah's* Daughter; but the Margin more properly says, to talk with her, in which *Pagnine*, *Arius Montanus*, *Tremellius* and *Junius* do agree; and by this Version of *talking with her*, may reasonably be meant that they went yearly to visit her after her being dedicated to the Service of God. From which likewise may very well be inferred, That she was alive long after her Father had performed his Vow upon her, and after his Death too; for he reigned over *Israel*, but six Years.

Jephthah's sacrificing his Daughter, is by our ingenious Countryman *Dr. Brown* placed among his *Vulgar Errors*, where he very learnedly refutes it by Authority of Scripture and Reason. In fine, from what hath been said, it is reasonable to conclude, that *Jephthah* did not sacrifice his Daughter; and that Part of *ver. 31. of Judg. xi. shall be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a Burnt-Offering*, ought thus to be translated, *I will*

and this was (i) not the first Instance of their Temper, which formerly went no further than Words: But now the mutinous *Ephraimites* carry it further, and with as little Reason. For assembling their Forces together, they came upon *Jephthah*, and demand why he fought the *Ammonites* without them? *Jephthah* very calmly expostulates the Matter with them, and casts the Blame wholly upon themselves, who refused to come to his Assistance when the *Ammonites* attack'd him. The unreasonable *Ephraimites* were so enraged at this just Reproach, that, having nothing to urge in Vindication of themselves, and depending on their Numbers, threatened to burn his House over his Head. *Jephthah* finding it to no Purpose to reason longer with them, musters what Force he could in so short Time, and being flushed with the late Success, resolves to fight the *Ephraimites*; who had no Reason to despise them, by calling them Fugitives of *Ephraim*; for the *Gileadites* needed no Reproach to rouse or whet their Courage, especially under the Conduct of their valiant General *Jephthah*. The Armies join, and after a short but sharp Dispute, the Fortune of the Battle declared for *Gilead*, *Ephraim* being forc'd to fly. *Jephthah* resolving to make sure Work, and prevent the *Ephraimites* from disturbing him quickly, secures all the Passes on the *Jordan*, which those *Ephraimites* that escaped in the Fight, must of Necessity pass, to get home: So that as fast as any of them came thither, if upon Examination they owned themselves *Ephraimites*, they were put to the Sword: If any denied, they gave them the Test, which was to pronounce the Word (k)SHIBBOLETH, which

consecrate it to the Lord, or I will offer it up for a Burnt-Offering, in Proportion to the Circumstance of the Person or Creature that first should meet him.

(i) Not the first. 'Tho' *Gideon* had called the *Ephraimites* to assist in the Pursuit of the *Midianites*, and had given them the Advantage of Plunder, and Honour of taking *Oreb* and *Zeeb*, two

Princes of *Midian*, yet because they were not called at first to the Battle, they took upon them to reprehend *Gideon* very sharply for the Affront; which helike a prudent Man took patiently, and appeased them with good Words, extolling their Valour, and applauding their Success.

(k) *Shibboleth*, Which signifies a Stream, Water-Course, or Falling of Waters.

they

they could not do, either thro' Fear or Infatuation, calling it *SIBBOLETH*; which small Variation cost them their Lives. In this Action and Pursuit there were slain two and forty thousand of the *Ephraimites*.

Jephthab, having thus successfully rid himself both of his foreign and domestick Enemies, spent the rest of his Life in Peace, which lasted not long, for the whole Time of his Administration was but of six Years Continuance,

Jephthab is succeeded by *Ibzan* of *Bethlehem*, of whom there is nothing more recorded, than that he had thirty Sons and thirty Daughters, and that he reigned seven Years. *Elon* a *Zebulonite* succeeded *Ibzan*, who governed *Israel* ten Years; and after him *Abdon* ruled eight: All that is said of this last is, that he had forty Sons, and thirty Grandsons. In these three Reigns *Israel* enjoyed a Peace of three and twenty Years; in which Time growing wanton they lapsed into their former Sins; by which they provoked God to punish them, which he did, in delivering them into the Hands of the *Philistines*.

Samson, who was the last of those who are accounted (l) extraordinary Judges of *Israel*, is supposed to have been born about the Time of (m) *Jephthab*'s Victory. His Birth being attended with unusual Events and Circumstances, we will relate the Particulars. *Samson* was the Son of *Manoah* a (n) *Danite*, whose Wife having been long barren, the Angel of the Lord appeared to her when she was alone, and told her she should conceive and bear a Son, directing her how to manage and or-

(l) *Extraordinary*. That is, Judges or Deliverers raised up in an extraordinary Manner. Others were raised at the Time when they were wanted: But *Samson* was promised for a Deliverer before he was born. Therefore because there were many extraordinary Things that happened, both leading to, and attending his Birth, it is very proper to trace his History from the Beginning.

(m) *Jephthab*'s. Allowing *Samson* to have been born at this Time, he must be at least thirty Years old at the Death of *Abdon*, his immediate Predecessor:

And when he took upon him the Administration.

(n) *Danite*. The Tribe of *Dan* bordering upon the *Philistines* was most exposed to their Incursions and Invasions, and therefore God out of that Tribe chose *Samson* for a Judge and Revenger. Which is very agreeable to the Prophecy of *Jacob* when he blessed his Sons a little before his Death. *Dan shall be a Serpent by the Way, an Adder by the Path, biting the Heels of the Horse, so that his Rider shall fall backwards.*

der herself whilst she was with Child, by forbearing Wine or strong Drink, and all unclean Meats; and that after she was delivered of him, she should not ^o shave his Head, for he should be a *Nazarite* unto God from his Birth, and should begin to deliver *Israel* from the Oppression of the *Philistines*. The Woman acquaints her Husband with this Interview between her and the Angel; and he being not so much surprized as overjoyed at the Hopes of having a Son, had the Curiosity to see this divine Messenger himself, his Pretence for it being to be further instructed in the Management of the Child when he should be born. God graciously answered his Request, and the Angel again appeared, repeating to the expecting Couple the former Instructions. The Angel appearing in human Shape, *Manoab* took him to be a Man of God, and pressed him to accept of an Entertainment. The Angel told him he would not, but advised him to express his Gratitude in a Burnt-Offering to the Lord. *Manoab* accordingly prepares a Kid and a Meat-Offering, and offered it upon a Rock unto God, and then the Angel in a wonderful Manner discovered himself, which before he refused to do at *Manoab's* Importunity; for when the Flame ascended from the Altar, the Angel ascended in it and disappeared. Now poor *Manoab* begins too late, he fears, to repent his Curiosity, and both he and his Wife prostrate themselves on the Ground; but he looking upon himself and Wife as lost, cried out, *We shall surely die, because we have dared to see God.* But the good Woman armed with more Reason and Courage argues with her timorous desponding Hus-

^o *Shave*. Long Hair was esteemed very much among the *Jews*, and here *Samson's* Mother was forbid to cut his Hair, because he was to be a *Nazarite* unto the Lord, that is, dedicated to the Lord, the Sanctity of his Consecration consisting in his long and uncut Hair, which was a token not only of Beauty, but of Majesty and Veneration. As to the cutting off his

Hair after by *Delilah*, it was done in a fraudulent Manner and with a hostile Intent, not only to deprive him of his Hair, but of his Strength, that so they might destroy him. Besides, it may be said to be done in Judgment upon him for suffering himself to be deluded by an infidel Harlot.

band,

band, and tells him, That if the Lord had intended to destroy them, he would not have accepted an Offering from them, nor condescended to communicate such a Blessing to them as he had promised.

According to the appointed Time the Woman was delivered of a Son, whom, from the Angel's appearing the second Time to her, she called *Samson*. By the Consequence it is reasonable to suppose, that *Samson's* Parents observed the Directions given by the Angel for his Nursing and Erudition; for whilst a Child, the Lord blessed him so that he grew to a wonderful Strength: And while he was but a Youth, the Spirit of the Lord began to (p) move him at certain Times to exert himself in Actions of Strength and Activity, in the (q) old Camp of *Dan*, between *Zorab* and *Eshtaol*.

Samson being grown to Man's Estate, had a Mind to travel and see the Country; and coming to *Tinnath*, a City belonging to the *Philistines*, he happened to cast his Eyes on a beautiful *Philistine*, who so captivated the young Hero, that he could not live without her. But in Duty to his Father and Mother, he would not marry without their Consent. The fond Parents expostulated

(p) *Move him.* This is an *Hebrew* Phrase, for it is often used upon particular Occasions, where God very signally appeared in the Action; but in none oftener than in the History of *Samson's* Administration: for upon every Emergency it is said, *The Spirit of the Lord came upon him.* Hence St. *Ambrose* observes on *Luke* i. 17. *He shall go before him in the Spirit and Power of Elias*; these two, the Spirit and Power (which is Fortitude) are always joined together: For all Fortitude, whether in attempting or suffering, is from the Holy Ghost, that inspires us. Thus *John the Baptist* is said to have the Spirit and Power of *Elias*: And the Angel *Gabriel* said to the Blessed Virgin, *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the Power of the most High shall overshadow thee.* And our Blessed Lord tells his Apostles, *Acts* i. 8. *Ye shall receive the Power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you.* Whence we see, Power is always attributed to the Holy Ghost; and therefore the

Septuagint very aptly in this Place turn it, *The Spirit of the Lord began to go along with him.* *Judg.* xiii. 25. That is, always inspired and stimulated him on to the Performance of godly and heroic Actions. *The Spirit of Fortitude was with him from the Lord to strengthen him;* saith the *Chaldee* Paraphrase.

(q) *Old Camp.* This Camp of *Dan* was probably that Place, where the *Danites* pitched their Camp in their Expedition and Enterprize against *Laisb*, *Judg.* xviii. 11. For it is not at all likely, that the *Philistines*, who had the *Israelites* at that Time under an entire Subjection, should suffer them to have any standing Camp. And, if the Reader looks back a little, this is another Argument, that the Story of *Micab*, and of the *Danites* Expedition, was transacted before *Samson's* Time, tho' by the Compilers of the Bible they are related after, as the Story of *Job* is.

with

with their Son the Unreasonableness of the Match, in offering to marry into an uncircumcised Family. But the amorous Youth, consulting his Passion more than Religion, was so pressing in his Request to his Parents, that their Indulgence was not Proof against it; but to gratify him, they went with him to *Timnath* to see this Beauty, and treat with her Parents about the Marriage.

As they were on their Journey, *Samson* straggling from the Company, a young Lion came in a mighty Rage out of the Vineyards of *Timnath* and attack'd him. Upon which the (r) Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, so that he slew the Lion with as much Ease, as if it had been a Kid. After this Action he went on and overtook his Parents, but acquainted them not with this Adventure of the Lion. Being arrived at *Timnath*, the Match was soon concluded; and not long after, *Samson* and his Parents take another Journey to solemnize the Nuptials; but in their Way to *Timnath*, *Samson* remembering the Place where he had encounter'd the Lion, his Curiosity led him to see what was become of the Carcase; when, to his great Surprise and Amazement, he found in it a Swarm of Bees, with some Honey: Of which taking some in his Hands, he went on eating, and when he overtook his Parents he gave them some of it, but did not tell them whence he had it.

Being arrived at *Timnath*, *Samson* entertained the Relations on both Sides for seven Days, and to grace the Nuptials the more, his Wife's Kindred brought thirty of their prime Youth to bear him Company. To these young Men, *Samson*, during the Wedding Feast, proposed a Riddle, which was this; "Out of the Eater
" came forth Meat, and out of the Strong came forth
" Sweetness." He gave them seven Days to expound the Riddle in, upon Condition that if they expounded it, he would give them thirty Garments, and as many Shirts; but if they did not, they should give him the

(r) *Spirits*. See Note on the last Letter (p) of this Alphabet.

JUDGES CHAP. XIV.
Samson finds honey in the lions carcass.

50



JUDGES 14. Verse 8.

And he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion, and behold, there was a swarm of bees, and honey in the carcass of the lion.

330.

same Number. The young Men not knowing how to expound the Riddle, applied themselves to his Wife, and persuaded her to discover the Meaning of it. After much Importunity she prevailed upon her Husband, who was so weak as to trust her with it, and she immediately told it to those young Men, who came to *Samson* at the End of the seven Days, and said; “What is sweeter than Honey, and what is stronger than a Lion?” *Samson* was satisfied his Wife had discovered the Secret; for he knew he had told it to no body else; and therefore to let them know he was sensible of foul Play in the Matter, he with Indignation replied; “If you had not plowed with my Heifer, you could not have expounded my Riddle.” Then yielding his Wager lost, he prepares to pay it; and going to *Ascalon*, a City of the *Philistines*, he slew thirty Men, whose Garments he gave to those that had expounded the Riddle. Being incensed against the *Philistines* for this unfair Dealing about the Riddle, he left *Timnath*, and returned to his Father’s House. But tho’ he had entertained a just Resentment against the *Philistines*, yet he retained a Fondness for his Wife, to whose Weakness he did not so much impute the Discovery of the Riddle, as to the Fraud of her Countrymen. Some Time after he returned to *Timnath* to visit his Wife, and as a Token of his Affection he brought a Kid with him for a Present; and preparing to go to Bed to her, her Father would not permit him, urging for Excuse, that he thought he slighted her, and therefore had given her in Marriage to one of his (s) Companions; but if he pleas’d, her younger Sister, who was more beautiful, was at his Service.

This was an additional Provocation, for which *Samson* intends a sharp Revenge, and which he executed thus. He found Means to catch three hundred

(s) *Companions*. I suppose to one of the thirty, that they had provided to bear him Company at the Wedding; and, it is very probable, as a Reward of the Treachery in discovering the Secret of the Riddle.

(*r*) Foxes, which he tied two and two together by the Tails, with lighted Torches to them, and drove the Foxes into the standing Corn, by which Means he burnt not only the Corn, but the Vineyards and Olive-Trees. The *Philistines* understanding it was *Samson*, Son-in-law to the *Timmite*, that had done this Mischief, because his Father-in-law had taken away his Wife, came in Revenge to *Timmath*, and burnt *Samson's* Wife and her Father. This gave *Samson* fresh Occasion of quarrelling with the *Philistines* again, and he was so far from concealing his Resentment, or using any Stratagem to be reveng'd on them, that he openly declar'd he would have Satisfaction; which he forthwith did in a great Slaughter of them.

After this Action, *Samson* well knowing he had provoked the *Philistines* to the highest Degree, for better Security took up his Residence in the Top of the Rock *Etam*: Which when the *Philistines* understood, they march'd into *Judab* and encamped there, demanding *Samson* of the Inhabitants, that they might have Satisfaction of him for the Wrong he had done them. The Men of *Judab* dreading the Consequence of this Invasion, immediately detach'd three thousand Men of

(*r*) *Foxes*. The catching of so many Foxes (which are a very cunning wary Creature) is very ludicrously question'd by some. But if they would consider, that what *Samson* did in this Case was by divine Inspiration, and that in every other great Action of his, *The Spirit of God* is said to come mightily upon him, their Murmurs might be stop'd. For we may reasonably suppose, that God by his Angel seconding the Acts of *Samson*, these Foxes might be disposed and got together, that they might easily be taken by him; as God directed all Creatures to come to *Noah* before the Flood, to be preserved by him in the Ark. But it is plain from Scripture, that *Judea*, and especially that Part of it which was the Portion of the Tribe of *Dan* (to which *Samson* belonged) abounded with Foxes; for the *Septuagint* render *Judg.* i. 35. *Salebim*, in which are Foxes, but Foxes are left out in our Translation. And yet,

as incredulous as some would seem to be in Transact on mentioned in Holy Scriptures, they readily credit the almost incredible Accounts of profane Authors. *Julius Caesar* is said to have produced at one Shew four hundred Lions. *Probus* the Emperor a thousand Leopards, a thousand Stags, a thousand Bears, &c. *Hellogabalus* a thousand Weasels, &c. as *Lampridius* and *Popiscus* testify in the Lives of them, and *Pliny*, l. 8. c. 16. How strange is it then, that *Samson's* getting three hundred Foxes together should seem so extravagant to any one? But besides the Satisfaction *Samson* might take in expressing his Resentment thus on the *Philistines*, he may reasonably be thought to have another End in it; for by catching so many Foxes he secured the Vineyards of his own People from these mischievous Creatures, so that this Injury to the *Philistines* was a Benefit to himself.

their

their Tribe to go and take *Samson*, telling him, “Didst thou not know, that we were subject to the *Philistines*, why then hast thou provok’d them so much?” Adding, that they were come to seize and deliver him to the *Philistines*. *Samson* knew his own Strength, but would not use it against his Countrymen ; only obliging them by Oath not to side with the *Philistines* against him, he gave them Leave to bind him ; upon which they brought him to the Place where the *Philistines* lay encamped ; who seeing him brought bound, thought they had him secure now, and went out shouting for Joy to receive him. But before they could lay Hands on him, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him so powerfully, that he broke the Cords from his Arms with as much Ease as if they had been burnt Flax ; and looking about him for a Weapon, he could find no better than a Jaw-bone of an Ass ; however, being inspir’d, he with that dispatch’d a thousand of the *Philistines*. The Heat of this Action made him so excessively thirsty, that he was ready to faint, and being in a Place where there was no Water to be had, he address’d himself to the Lord thus ; “Thou hast given this great Deliverance into the Hand of thy Servant ; and shall I die with Thirst and fall into the Hands of the Uncircumcised ?” God heard his Complaint, and that this miraculous Victory gain’d by the Hand of one Man, and so poorly arm’d as with nothing but the Jaw-bone of an Ass, might not be unattended, he as miraculously gratifies the Champion’s Thirst, by a Supply of Water from a Rock, which never before produc’d any Moisture ; he clave a hollow (u) Rock called *Maetes*, which was at *Lebi*, and Water plen-

(u) Rock. *Vetabius, Junius* and *Tremellius* have remarked, that all the Versions, except the *Chaldee* Paraphrase, have transformed the Place where *Samson* killed the thousand *Philistines*, which is called *Lebi*, into a Jaw-bone ; and a hollow Rock which was in that Place into a hollow Tooth, which was in the Jaw-bone : *Judg. xv. 19.* translating, God clave a hollow Place which was in the Jaw,

and there came Water thereout ; whereas they should have translated, God clave a hollow Rock called *Maetes*, which was at *Lebi*, &c. The same Rock *Maetes* is mention’d in *Zephaniab i. 11.* where our Translation renders it the low Place. It was called *Maetes*, because it had the Figure of a Mortar ; the *Chaldee* Paraphrase says, that it was situated near the Brook *Kidron*, or near *Tiberias*, accord-

plentifully flowed from it; of which *Samson* having drank, his Spirit came, and he revived.

Samson's next Exploit was at *Gaza*, another City of the *Philistines*, whither, invited by Curiosity, or Desire of the *Philistine* Women, he went, and took up his Lodging at a House of publick Entertainment. He was not long conceal'd here; for the Inhabitants of the Place having Notice of him, beset the House, and watching for him all Night at the Gate of the City, concluded they should have him in the Morning, and then they would dispatch him. *Samson* being inform'd of their Design upon him, lay still till Midnight; and then rising, took the Gates of the City, with the two Posts and Bars, and laying them on his Shoulders, carried them to the Top of a Hill which looks towards *Hebron*; and so escaped the Danger that threatened him. But a more fatal Danger than this soon after befel him: For falling in Love with a beautiful Woman that liv'd in the Vale of *Sorek*, whose Name was *Delilah*, he was so captivated with her Charms, that he had little Regard to his own Safety. The Princes of the *Philistines* observing *Samson's* Fondness, take Advantage of it, and addressing themselves to *Delilah*, promise to give her each of them (w) eleven hundred Shekels of Silver, if she could intice him to discover to her wherein his great Strength lay, that so they might bind and punish him for the great Mischief he had done them. So great a Bribe easily prevail'd with the Woman to betray her Lover; who after much Sollicitation and Importunity told her, that he

ing to the Allegorical Comments of the *Jews*. Nor did *Josephus* the Historian understand this Text otherwise, when he remarks, *Antiq. l. 7. c. 10.* "That God, having heard the Prayer of *Samson*, made a Fountain to spring in a Rock, which did send out Abundance of sweet and clear Water." And those that have travell'd through *Palestine*, do assure us, that this Fountain remains to this Day. *St. Jerome* tells us, he saw it; and *Michael Glycas*, who lived about the Year 1120, says, That it was to be seen

at that Time in the Suburbs of *Eleutheropolis*, and that it was called *The Fountain of the Jew*.

(w) *Eleven, &c.* The Number of these Princes of the *Philistines* is supposed to be five, from the five chief Cities, *viz. Accaron, Ascalon, Azoth, Gaza, and Gath*, 1 Sam. vi. 17. So that five Times eleven hundred, or five thousand five hundred Shekels of Silver, each in Value fifteen Pence, would amount to about three hundred forty-three Pounds and fifteen Shillings.

had

JUDGES CHAP. XVI.

51

Samson carries away the gates of Gaza.



JUDGES 16. Verse 3.

*And Samson lay till midnight, and
arose at midnight; and took the doors
of the gate of the city. etc.*

334.

had been a *Nazarite* to God from his Birth, and that no Razor ever yet came upon his Head; but if he should be shaven, his Strength would be no more than that of a common Man. *Delilah* having thus extorted the great Secret from him, sent for the Princes of the *Philistines* to come to her, assuring them that he had now discovered the whole Secret of his Strength to her. They accordingly come and bring the Money they had promised her; and she having lulled him to Sleep, as his Head lay on her Lap, a Man, whom she had provided, shaved off the seven Locks of his Head; then rousing him, she said, "The *Philistines* be upon thee, *Samson*." He, not knowing what was done, thought to stretch himself, as he used to do, for as yet he knew not that the Lord was departed from him; but he too soon discovered it by the Loss of his Strength. The *Philistines*, seeing him now really disabled, seized him immediately; and to make sure of him, they put out his Eyes, and bringing him to *Gaza*, they fettered him, and made him work in the Prison.

Some Time after the *Philistines* kept a Day of Rejoicing for the taking of their greatest Enemy, and offered Sacrifice to their God (x) *Dagon*. When they had feasted awhile, and were grown merry, they called for *Samson* to make Sport; upon which he was brought from the Prison, and being placed between the two Pillars that supported the Roof, they made themselves Sport with him. Besides the great Conflux of People of all Sorts that were in the House of *Dagon*, at this Solemnity, there were about three thousand on the Roof, that came to be Spectators of *Samson's* Misery. By this Time his Hair was somewhat grown; and it is probable his Strength might begin to return: However, whether it did or not in that Manner, it is very likely these Indignities offered him by the *Philistines* provok'd him to the

(x) *Dagon*. This *Dagon* was the common God of the Sea-Coasts, having the Form of a Man from the Navel upwards,

and downwards of a Fish; from which the Word is derived.

highest Degree; wherefore perswading the Lad that guided him, to set him so that he might feel both the Pillars on which the House stood; on Pretence of leaning on them to rest himself, he with great Earnestness prayed to God to strengthen him but this one Time, that he might be reveng'd of the *Philistines* for the Loss of his Eyes. God heard his Prayers, and gave him such a wonderful Accession of Strength, that taking hold of the two Pillars with both his Hands, he bowed himself with all his Might; and at the same Time saying, "Let me die with the *Philistines*;" he exerted his Strength in such a Manner, that forcing the Pillars from their Bases, the House fell down upon all that were in it. So that *Samson* had a full Revenge on his Enemies, and put an End to his miserable Condition; slaying more at his Death; than in the Height of his Strength. Thus died *Samson*; who is said to have judged *Israel* twenty Years; and was rather a Scourge to the *Philistines*, than a Deliverer of the *Israelites*. Yet he may be said to have begun to deliver *Israel* in this last Action; tho' it cost him his Life. When his Relations heard of his Death, they came and brought him to his Father's Sepulchre between *Zorah* and *Eshtaol*, where they buried him.

After the Death of *Samson*; the Administration of the Government of *Israel* seems to have devolved upon *Eli*; who was then High-Priest. In the Beginning of his Reign was born *Samuel* the Prophet, the Son of *Elkanah*; a(y) *Levite*, descended from *Korah*. He lived in the City of *Ramah*; which belonged to the Tribe of *Ephraim*; with his two Wives, *Hannah* and *Peninnah*. The latter of which had Children; but the first none. *Elkanah* according to the Custom once a Year went up to *Shiloh* to worship and sacrifice to the Lord, taking his two Wives and his Children with him; where,

(y) *Levite* descended, &c. *Elkanah* was descended from that *Korah*, who, in *Moses's* Time, for his Rebellion in the Wilderness, was swallowed up by the opening Earth, and all that he had with

him, *Numb.* xvi. except his Son, *Numb.* xxvi. 11. from the eldest of which, named *Assir*, the Genealogy is drawn down to *Samuel*, in 2 *Chron.* vi; from *ver.* 22, to 28.

after he had made his Offerings, he gave Presents to both his Wives; but *Hannah* being his best beloved, he gave her a double Share of his Favour. This bred ill Blood between the two Wives; and *Peninnah* priding herself in her Children, reproach'd *Hannah* for her Sterility. Her Husband endeavours to comfort her; but *Hannah* seeks for it from a more powerful Hand, addressing herself earnestly in Prayer to the Lord, and vowing at the same Time, that if he would bless her with a Son; she would dedicate him to the Lord all the Days of his Life, and that no Razor should come upon his Head. *Eli* the Priest, who was near her; seeing her Lips move, but not hearing her speak; supposed she was intoxicated with Wine; and chid her for it; but finding himself mistaken; he turned his Reproof into a Blessing, praying to God to hear her Petition. Being returned to *Ramah*, she conceived; and was in due Time deliver'd of a Son, whom she named *Samuel*, because she had asked him of God; which his Name implies.

Hannah having weaned her little Son; according to her Promise brought him to the House of the Lord at *Shiloh* with an Offering, acquainting *Eli*; that she was the Woman, that some Time since had prayed to the Lord for a Child, and that she came to perform her Vow; which was, to dedicate him to the Service of the Lord. *Eli* at this gave Thanks to the Lord, for having heard and answered *Hannah's* Prayer; and *Hannah* in a holy Rhapsody did the same. *Elkanah* and *Hannah* having performed their Vow, prepare to return; and *Eli* pronouncing a Blessing upon them said; "The Lord give thee Seed of this Woman, for the Loan which is lent to the Lord," meaning *Samuel*; whom they left behind them with *Eli*, who put on him a Linen Ephod, and he served in the House of the Lord as *Eli* had directed him. After that, once a Year; till he grew up, his Mother, when she came up to offer the yearly Sacrifice, made him a little Coat, and brought it to him.

Eli the Priest had two Sons, but very wicked ones; for, valuing themselves upon the Authority and Dignity of the Priesthood, they domineer'd over the Men, and debauched the Women. And to such an Insolence were they grown, that not content with the Portion of the Flesh of the Sacrifice, which God had assign'd them, they would seize what they liked best, and at what Time they pleased. By these Means the Service of God grew contemptible in the Eyes of the People; who were indifferent whether they offered or not. But how heinous soever the Sins of the Priests might be, they did not excuse the People from Guilt in neglecting the Service of the Lord.

Eli himself had often heard of the Wickedness of his Sons, yet did not restrain or punish them as he, that was both their Father and Magistrate, ought to have done, giving them only a slight Reproof, which was so far from dissuading, that they still persisted in their wicked Practices. At last a (z) Man of God came to *Eli* with a Message that threatened him and his Household with Ruin for his careless mild Administration: First upbraiding him with Ingratitude for slighting the Honour done his Family in investing the Priesthood in it; threatening his Sons *Hophni* and *Phineas* with Death, which he foretells shall happen at one and the same Time. And to shew *Eli* the wretched Poverty that his Posterity should fall into, he added, That every one that should be left in his House, should come and crouch to a more faithful Priest, whom the Lord would set up, for a Piece of Silver and a Morsel of *Bread*; and shall say, “Put me, I pray thee, into one of the Priest’s Office, that I may have a Piece of Bread to eat.”

(z) *Man of God*. Who this Man of God was, that brought this unwelcome Message to *Eli*, is very uncertain. *Tremellius* and *Junius* in their Notes upon the Place take him to be *Samuel*. Which is very strange, and very unlikely to be true, for *Samuel* was then too young, and in the third of the first of *Samuel* he is set forth as one not yet acquainted with the Voice of God; and also that the Lord,

when he had spoken to *Samuel*, tells him as a Thing he knew not before, that he had denounced a Judgment against *Eli* and his House. It is certain, that it was a very dark Time: There was no open Vision, no certain known Prophet, such as *Moses* had been before, and as *Samuel*, *Nathan*, *Elijah*, and others were afterwards.

Soon

Soon after this the Lord gives old *Eli* another Denunciation of his Judgments by a younger Hand, *Samuel* being lodg'd in the further Part of the Tabernacle among the *Levites*, the Lord in the Night called him by his Name; who, as the Manner was, answered; Here am I; and starting up, ran to *Eli's* Apartment, supposing he had called: But when *Eli* told him he had not called him, he went and lay down again. This was repeated three Times, and *Samuel* began at last to be positive with *Eli*, that he did call him. This rouzed *Eli*, and made him think there was something extraordinary in it; which Thought he communicated to *Samuel*, bidding him go to Bed again, and directed him, that if the Lord should call him again, he should say, "Speak Lord; for thy Servant heareth." As *Eli* expected, so it happened; and *Samuel* did as he directed him. Then said the Lord to *Samuel*, "All that I have spoken concerning *Eli* and his House I will perform; for I have told him, that I will judge his House for ever, for the Iniquity to which he is privy: Because his Sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them: Therefore I have sworn unto the House of *Eli*, that the Iniquity of *Eli's* House shall not be purged with Sacrifice, nor Offering for ever."

This Sentence was so terrible even to *Samuel*, that had no Share in it, that he was afraid to tell it *Eli*; but *Eli* now thoroughly awakened, by the Message he had received before, and the Apprehension he now had, that the Lord had revealed something like it to *Samuel*, obliges him to tell him what the Lord had said to him. *Samuel* obeys, and tells him the very worst. To which poor *Eli* humbly submitted, saying; "It is the Lord, let him do what he pleaseth."

And now to the great Comfort of *Israel* God was pleased to appear again in *Shiloh*, revealing himself to *Samuel* there. For as *Samuel* grew up, both in Stature as a Man, and in Grace as a Man of God, the Lord was with him, and accomplished whatsoever he spoke by

him; so that all *Israel* knew, from one End of the Land to the other, that *Samuel* was a faithful Prophet to the Lord.

The *Israelites* being again blessed with a Prophet, promised to themselves great Things, concluding all that they undertook would succeed; and therefore being animated with this Thought, they had a Mind to try if they could not shake off the *Philistine* Yoke. Wherefore intending to fight them, they incamped in a Place, which was afterwards upon better Success called *Eben-Ezer*. The *Philistines* sat down by *Aphék*, a City of *Judab*, and in a short Time the Armies join'd; but the *Israelites*, instead of Victory, find the Judgments of God denounced against Priest and People ready to fall on them; for in the Action they lost four thousand of their Men. The rest making an orderly Retreat to their Camp, the Elders began to consider what might be the Cause of this Defeat; and fondly supposing it to be for want of having the Ark with them, they resolve for the future to carry it with them in all their other Expeditions. Then they sent Messengers to *Shiloh*, for *Hophni* and *Phineas* the Priests to bring the Ark into the Camp. Which they forthwith did; and when the *Israelites* saw the Ark brought into the Camp, they gave such a Shout, as made the Earth ring: Which so disheartened the *Philistines*, that they were at the Brink of Despair, especially when they heard the true Cause of this Rejoicing.

The *Israelites* on the other Hand were as fool-hardy, as the *Philistines* were dejected. For concluding themselves secure under the Protection due to the Ark, and not in the least questioning Success, they again offer the *Philistines* Battle; who engaging, slew thirty thousand of their Foot, among which were *Hophni* and *Phineas*; put the rest to flight, and, which was the terriblest Blow of all, took the Ark of God. One of the Soldiers, of the Tribe of *Benjamin*, seeing the Day lost, made his Escape from the Field of Battle, and came running to *Shiloh* with his Cloaths rent, and Earth upon his Head; which

which in those Countries were Emblems of extreme Sorrow for the greatest Losses and Misfortunes.

Tho' *Eli* had disobliged the Lord highly in his remiss and careless Administration, yet he had a religious Concern for the Safety of *Israel*, and more particularly for the Ark of God. Upon this Account therefore he went and sat at the Gate to hear (for he could not see) how Affairs went: Whilst he was sitting here, the foresaid *Benjamite* that escaped in the Fight, having told the Citizens how Things went, there was a mighty Outcry among them. Whereupon, *Eli* asking what was the Meaning of that Tumult, the *Benjamite* Soldier was brought to him, who told him the *Israelites* were routed, his Sons in the Number of the Slain, and the Ark of the Lord taken. *Eli* kept his Seat till the last Piece of News was told him, but then his Spirits failing, he fell from his Seat backwards; and being heavy as well as old, his Neck broke with the Fall, and he died, having judged *Israel* forty Years. His Son *Phineas* had a Wife at this Time, who being big with Child, and near her Time, hearing of the Death of her Father and her Husband, and the Loss of the Ark, fell in Labour; and being delivered of a Son, with her dying Breath she named him *Icabod*; which signifies, No Glory, adding, as a Reason of giving the Child this Name, *That the Glory is departed from Israel*; which she meant by the taking of the Ark of God.

The *Philistines* having cleared the Field, and carried off the Plunder, brought the Ark to *Asbdod*, and plac'd it in the Temple of *Dagon* near to the Idol; whom the next Morning they found fallen down upon his Face before the Ark of the Lord. They set him in his Place, and next Day came in again, and not only found him fallen to the Ground, but his Head and Palms of his Hands broken off, and lying on the Threshold, only his lower Part was left intire. Whence a superstitious Custom arose among the *Philistines*, that neither Priests nor People would tread upon the Threshold,

And now to let these Idolaters see, that the Cause is no longer between the *Philistines* and the *Israelites*, but between God and *Dagon*; the Lord lays his heavy Judgments on *Ashdod*, and all the Coast Towns thereabouts, afflicting the People with the Piles, and destroying at the same Time the Country with Mice. The People of *Ashdod* were sensible this was a Judgment from the God of *Israel* for taking and detaining the Ark; therefore consulting what to do, the Princes of the *Philistines*, partly to redress the Complaints of the *Ashdodites*, but chiefly to carry the Ark about in Triumph, send it to *Gath*, where the same Judgments pursue the Detainers of it. Whereupon they remove it to *Ekron*, but the Inhabitants no sooner see it, but they cry out, “ They have brought about the Ark of the God of *Israel* to us, to slay us and our People.

Whilst the Ark was here, not only the Piles, but a deadly Plague attended the People; wherefore calling the Priests, they resolved to send the Ark away, but could not presently agree upon the Manner of doing it. The Priests advise them not to send it away empty, but to prepare a Trespass-Offering for Atonement of their Sacrilege, which was to consist of five golden Emrods, and five golden Mice, according to the Number of the Princes of the *Philistines*; hoping, that by thus acknowledging the Glory of the Lord of *Israel*, he would rid them of the Plagues he had inflicted on them: for why, said the Priests, should you be obstinate, as the *Egyptians* were, to your own Destruction? Then directing them to provide a new Cart, and two Milch-Kine, that never had been yoked, and fasten them to the Cart, without their Calves, they bid them lay the Ark on the Cart, and put the golden Emrods and Mice in a Coffer by the Side of the Ark, and send them away; But cautioned them strictly to observe which Way the Cart went; for if it went by the Way of *Bethshemesh*, they might conclude, that it was the God of *Israel* that had plagued them; but if it went not that Way, they

they should look upon all these Judgments only as common Accidents.

The *Philistines* sending the Ark away in this Manner, the Kine that drew it went on lowing directly to *Bethshemesh*; the five Princes of the *Philistines* follow'd at a Distance to see what would become of it; who, when they saw it arrive safely at *Bethshemesh*, return'd to *Ekron*. The *Bethshemites*, who were reaping in the Valley, seeing the Ark, were overjoyed. The Kine having drawn the Cart into the Field of *Joshua* the *Bethshemite*, stood still there by a great Stone, called the Stone of *Abel*; which the (a) *Levites* seeing, they took down the Ark of the Lord, and the Coffer that was with it, and laid them upon the great Stone. Then cleaving the Wood of the Cart to make a Fire with, they offered the Kine for a Burnt-Offering to the Lord. But some of the *Bethshemites*, whether moved by Joy or Curiosity, took the Liberty of looking into the Ark, (b) contrary to the Law; for which the Lord slew (c) seventy of them, which so terrified the rest, that they cried out, "Who is able to stand before this Holy Lord God? And to whom shall he go from us?" This made them de-

(a) *Levites*. *Bethshemesh* was a City, which belonged to the *Levites*. See *Josh.* xxi. 16.

(b) *Contrary*. See *Num.* iv. 40.

(c) *Seventy*, &c. *Cornelius a Lap.* very learnedly at first determines the Number of the People slain for this profane Curiosity to be but seventy, following therein the Opinion of *St. Jerom*, *Josephus*, and the *Hebrews*, That God smote seventy of the fifty thousand *Bethshemites*. But afterwards, inclining too much to the *Septuagint* and the *Chaldee Paraphrase*, will have them amount to fifty thousand and seventy Men that were slain; but with little Reason in my Opinion. But let us take the Judgment of others: The learned *Bochart* could not without Horror read what the Versions make the Scripture say, *1 Sam.* vi. 19. That God smote fifty thousand and threescore and ten Men of the Inhabitants of *Bethshemesh*, because they had looked into the Ark: For he could not imagine that God, who is

Goodness itself, could have made such a Slaughter of those who had received the Ark with Joy at its Return, and offered several Sacrifices to God on that Account. Besides, he could not conceive that there could have been such a Multitude of People in a Village on the Borders of *Judea*. These Considerations inclined them to believe the Opinion of *Josephus*, who says, That God only smote seventy Men; and he proves that the Text says no other thing, and that it should be translated, *And he smote threescore and ten Men of the People of Bethshemesh*, viz. fifty Men of a thousand, which answers exactly to the *Hebrew*. And he shews that it is not usual in the *Hebrew* Tongue to make thousands to go before inferior Numbers to make up a total Sum; but that they constantly begin with the less Numbers, and end with the greater, as *St. Jerom* has likewise observed in speaking of *Daniel's* seventy Weeks.

firous of removing the Ark, and send to *Kirjath-jearim*, to acquaint them that the *Philistines* had sent back the Ark of the Lord, and desire them to come and fetch it. Accordingly they come, and convey the Ark to the House of *Abinadab* on the Hill, whose Son *Eleazar* was consecrated to keep it; where it abode twenty Years.

Samuel, having upon the Death of *Eli* and Loss of the Ark, taken upon him the Administration, governed *Israel*; at the End of twenty Years, finding in the People a good Disposition to repent, and return to the Lord, exhorted them to put away the Strange Gods *Baal* and *Ashtaroth*, and only to serve the Lord; promising, that if they would do so, they should be delivered from the *Philistines*. Then ordering all *Israel* to meet him at *Mizpeh*, they came to him there: Where whilst they humbled themselves with Prayer and Fasting, the *Philistines* having Notice of this general Meeting came in Arms, and put them into a great Consternation. The *Israelites* thus frightened, begged of *Samuel* to intercede for them to the Lord. *Samuel* thereupon took a sucking Lamb, offered it whole for a Burnt-Offering, and prayed to the Lord for *Israel*. Whose Prayers were so effectual, that the *Philistines* coming to attack *Israel* at that same Instant, the Lord sent down such a Peal of Thunder on the *Philistines*, just as they were ready to engage, that the *Israelites* taking the Advantage of their Disorder gained a mighty Victory, and pursued them from *Mizpeh* beyond *Beth-shan*. From which Time the *Philistines* came not into the Country of the *Israelites*, who recovered the Towns those People had taken from them from *Ekron* to *Gath*. And *Samuel* in Memory of this great Deliverance set up a Monumental Stone between *Mizpeh* and *Shen*, calling it *Eben-Ezer*, that is, the Stone of Help.

After this, *Samuel*, for the better Administration of Justice, took a Circuit thro' *Bethel*, *Gilgal*, and *Mizpeh*, returning every Year to *Ramah*: But growing in Years, and unable to travel, he constituted his two Sons,

Joel

Joel and *Abiah*, Judges over *Israel*; who degenerating from their good Father were corrupted with Bribes, and acted unjustly. Whereupon the Elders of *Israel* assembling, went in a Body to *Ramah*, and complained to *Samuel*. Their Cause of Complaint was just; but when they took upon them to go further, and dictate to *Samuel* how to redress it, they forfeited his Love and God's Care. They would not only have their Grievances redress'd, but have the Form of their Government alter'd, insisting upon *Samuel's* Inability to govern them by Reason of his great Age, as much as upon the Injustice of his Sons. And seeing other Nations were govern'd by Kings, nothing would please them but they must have a King. This insolent Demand was displeasing to *Samuel*, who finding he could not dissuade them, consulted the Lord; who ordered him to give them a King, as they desired, but reproach'd them for their Ingratitudes to him and *Samuel* both: And to warn them of the dangerous Consequences of rejecting him and *Samuel* for a King, he gives him Instructions to lay before them what they were to expect from this wanton fickle Temper: That he should enslave them and their Children, by making them subject to all vile Offices; that they should be always in Arms and Tumults, liable to the Inconveniences of a constant War, and attended with heavy Taxes; and that then they would cry to the Lord, but he would not hear them.

Notwithstanding this Caution, which *Samuel* expressly delivered to the People, they persisted in their (d) Resolution,

(d) *Resolution*. It is supposed by some, that what made them so urgent at this Time for a King, was a present Straight they thought themselves in for want of an able Leader: For *Nabash*, the King of the *Amorites*, coming up to *Jabesh-Gilead*, and incamping before it, had put the Men of *Jabesh* into such a Fright, that without more to do they offered to surrender upon Terms, telling him, *They would become Subjects to him, if he would make a League with them,* 1 Sam. xi. 1.

But the haughty *Amorite*, in Contempt of *Israel*, let them know, that if he made a League with them, the Condition thereof should be, *That they should come out to him, and let him thrust out all their Right Eyes, and lay it for a Reproach upon all Israel.* The Elders of *Jabesh* in this sad Circumstance demanded seven Days Respite, that they might send Messengers into all the Coasts of *Israel*; and if in that Time no Succours arrived, they would submit. This, it is thought, made the

lution, positively saying, “ We will have a King over
 “ us, that we may be like other Nations, and that our
 “ King may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our
 “ Battles.” *Samuel* seeing them forefolute, again consult-
 ed the Lord about it, who bid him answer their Desire,
 and make them a King. Upon this *Samuel* dismissed
 the Elders of *Israel* to their Cities ; and since the setting
 up of a King at that Time, was but to gratify the Hu-
 mour of a fickle People, God fitted them with a Man
 extraordinary in his Person, being taller by the Head
 and Shoulders than any of the People. This was *Saul*,
 the Son of *Kish*, of the Tribe of *Benjamin*, a handsome
 Youth. *Kish*’s Asses being gone astray, he sent his Son
Saul with a Servant to seek them ; who after much wan-
 dering about came to the Town of *Ramah-Zophim*, *Sam-
 uel*’s Residence, without hearing any News of what
 they sought for. Here *Saul*’s Servant said to him,
 “ There is a (e) Seer in this Town, who may tell us where
 “ the Asses are.” *Saul* approved what his Servant pro-
 posed, and went into the Town enquiring for the Seer.
 God had the Day before given *Samuel* Notice of *Saul*’s
 coming, and declared to him he was the Person whom
 he had chosen to be King. *Saul* meeting there with *Sam-
 uel*, who was going up to a High Place to offer Sacri-
 fice, asked him where was the House of the Seer ? *Sam-
 uel*, understanding again that he was the Person God had
 appointed to be King, answered, “ I am the Seer: Go
 “ up with me to this High Place : You shall dine with
 “ me to-day, and I will dismiss you to-morrow, As
 “ for the Asses which were lost three Days ago, be not
 “ in Pain for them, they are found again.” Then he as-
 sured him, that all the best Things in *Israel* should be
 his : And bringing him Home with him, he invited

the Elders of *Israel* press so hard at that
 time upon *Samuel* for a King : Whereas
 they should have enquired of the Lord
 (as formerly they did) whom he on that
 Occasion would appoint for that time to
 be their General, to lead out their Forces

against their Enemy. But they, as it
 seems, had a mind to be more independ-
 ent of God.

(e) Seer. So the Prophets were called
 in those Days.

thirty Persons to bear him Company, seating *Saul* and his Servant at his Table, but placing *Saul* above all the other Guests, and distinguishing him besides by setting before him the best of the Meat.

After they had eaten, *Samuel*, taking *Saul* to the Top of the House, had further Communication with him there that Evening; and early in the Morning calling him up, that he might dismiss him, they went out together; and as they were going down towards the End of the City, *Samuel* bid *Saul* order his Servant to go (f) before, but stand still himself for awhile, that he might shew him what God had said concerning him. The Servant being gone out of Sight, *Samuel* taking a Vial of (g) Oil, poured it upon the Head of *Saul*, and (h) kissed him; adding, that he did this because the Lord had appointed him to be a Prince over his Inheritance. Then as a Token that what he had told him was true, he foretold several Particulars which should happen to him in his Return: That near *Rachel's* Tomb he would meet two Men, who should inform him that his Father's Asses were found again; that departing thence, he should meet three Men going to *Bethel*, one of them carrying three Kids, the second three Cakes of Bread, and the third a Bottle of Wine, and that they should give him two Parts thereof: And lastly, that when he came to the Mountain of God, where was a Garrison of the *Philistines*, he should meet a Company of Prophets

(f) *Before.* This was with Design to let *Saul* understand, that what *Samuel* was about to do was by Divine Appointment; and that when they should come to cast Lots among all the Tribes, as they after did, 1 Sam. x. 20, &c. *Saul* might not think he was chosen King by the Chance of a Lot. Besides, the e may be another Reason for *Samuel's* bidding *Saul* to send away his Servant, viz. lest the People, suspecting *Samuel* to do this by his own Will more than the Appointment of God, should mutiny. Therefore it was necessary that this should not be published till *Saul* was convinced that he was chosen by God himself.

(g) *Oil.* *Saul* was the first King of *Israel* that was anointed, though Unction was in Use before, as we may see in *Judges* ix. 8.

(h) *Kissed.* This signified a Communication of Grace, and a mutual Concord between the Regal and Sacerdotal Offices, a Kiss being an Emblem of Friendship and Peace. *Mariana* will have it to be a Token of Subjection and Homage; but in this Case (however it may be in others) it could not be so in *Samuel* towards *Saul*; for *Samuel* was Prince and Prophet; and this Act rather seems to make *Saul* his Equal, than his Superior.

going

going into the City, where the Spirit of God should fall upon him, and he should prophesy amongst them. After this he ordered *Saul* to go to *Gilgal*, where in seven Days he might expect him, because there *Samuel* intended to offer a Peace-Offering. All which Signs, that *Samuel* had foretold, *Saul* found to happen exactly.

And now, tho' *Samuel* had thus privately anointed *Saul*, which no body knew but themselves, yet for the general Satisfaction of the People, and that the Choice and Inauguration of the King might be more publick and solemn, *Samuel* called them before the Lord at *Mizpeh*; to which Place the Ark of the Lord was brought, that the Choice might be openly made, and declared by casting Lots among all the Tribes of *Israel*, to know from which of them the King was to be chosen. The Lot fell on the Tribe of *Benjamin*; and casting the Lot again among the Families of *Benjamin*, the Lot fell upon the Family of *Matri*, and at last on *Saul*, the Son of *Kish*. *Saul* being before assured that the Choice would fall on him, was not present at the casting the Lot; but the People enquiring of the Lord whether they should fetch him or not, he not only consented, but expressly directed them where to find him. Accordingly they went for him; and having brought him, they set him among them, where he appeared taller than all the People from the Shoulders upwards; which *Samuel* observing, said to them, "Behold him whom the Lord hath chosen; there is none like him among all the People!" At which Words the People gave a general Shout, saying, "God save the King." Then *Samuel* told them the Duty of a King, and the Manner of the Kingdom, writing it in a Book, and laid it before the Lord. Which done, he dismissed the People, and *Saul* went home to *Gibeab*, attended with a particular Company of Men, whom God had inclined to wait on him. But there were (i) some that were not pleased with the Choice, though

(i) *Some*. These are called Sons of *Belial*, 1 Sam. x. 27. that is, Men of a rebellious, proud, disobedient Spirit: Who tho' they had desired a King, yet now refuse

though they had desired a King, but despised *Saul*, and would not make any (*k*) Presents to him ; which *Saul* observed, but very prudently at that Time (*l*) connived at it.

refuse him ; desiring what they had not, and despising what they had. They do not express their Contempt of him by Name, but do it worse, in a more general way, saying, *v. 27. Shall He save us?*

(*k*) *Presents.* Presenting the King with Gifts was one way of recognizing him. The *Chaldee* Paraphrase says, They came not to salute him, which is the same Thing ; for the first Salutation offered to a King was always attended with Presents, which Presents carried with them a Sign of Peace and Friendship, of Congratulation and Joy, and of Subjection and Obedience. It was a general Custom,

and still continues among the Eastern Potentates, to bring Presents, there being no approaching them without.

(*l*) *Connived.* The *Hebreu* says he was deaf, that is, seemed or pretended not to hear. In which he was very politic, being unwilling to begin his Reign with any Tumult, which his just Resentment of such an Affront might have occasioned : If he had taken any Notice of the Affront, and not revenged it, he had shewn himself mean-spirited ; and if he had resented it, the People might have been apt to charge him with Severity and Cruelty.

The End of the First Volume.



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